

Contempt case adjourned

Botha vents fury on his accusers

Alex Duval Smith
in George, Western Cape

SHAKING with rage and shouting "they want to destroy me and my people", P.W. Botha stormed out of court yesterday after hearing a second day of damning evidence from official documents, implicating him in apartheid crimes during his time as South Africa's leader.

As the contempt case against the 82-year-old former president was adjourned for six weeks after only one witness was called, he realised he would not, at least for now, be able to refute allegations against him.

Rising from his seat, Mr Botha cursed his lawyers and slammed his fist against the court railings. "I have a right to be protected by the court. Unjustified accusations have been made by the witness, distributed throughout the world. I saw it on television."

The former prime minister and president had been brought to George regional court, east of Cape Town, for ignoring a subpoena to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). It wants to question him about his chairmanship of the state security council which directed undercover operations in the 1980s.

Taking the witness stand for the second day, the TRC's executive secretary, Paul van Zyl, leafed through state documents which he said indicated that Mr Botha had created a climate conducive to gross human rights violations and which condoned systematic torture.

Mr van Zyl read from the minutes of one meeting of the state security council which ordered "the identification and elimination of revolutionary leaders, particularly those with charisma".

Another document ordered the "physical destruction of the revolutionary organisations, to whittle people, facilities

or funds, inside the country or out, by any overt or covert means necessary". The objective was "to make the rotten areas clean before they become too infected. To establish that requires a lot of violence from our side, regardless of the international reaction".

For each of the 60 or so documents he read from, Mr van Zyl, a lawyer, underlined that the TRC merely wanted to call him to a hearing to clarify Mr Botha's role.

Mr Botha's lawyers attempted to stall the case, which began on Wednesday after a 24-hour delay, by frequently asking for further documents to be produced by the TRC. This led the prosecutor, Bruce Morrison, to call for an adjournment to June 1.

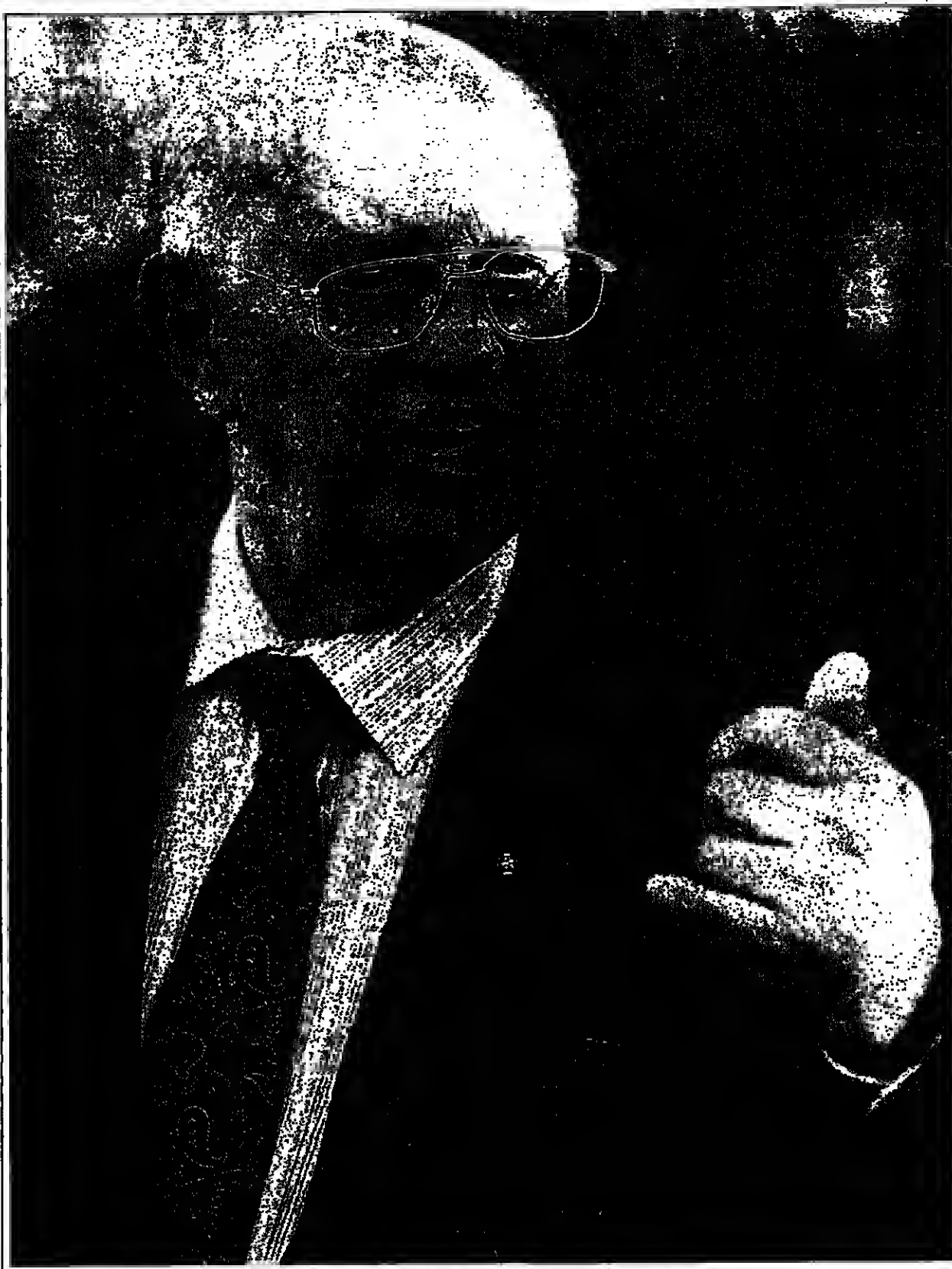
Objecting to the adjournment, Mr Botha's lawyer, Lappe Loubschere, said: "Evidence from this witness has been created. Certain perceptions which will remain unchanged for six weeks. This is an affront to our constitutional rights."

Outside court, Mr Botha said: "I am deeply shocked. This country is badly managed, this country is badly governed. They want to destroy my image and through me to humiliate my people."

Mr Botha, who ruled South Africa from 1978 to 1989, argues that the TRC has received all the answers it needs through 1,300 written replies he provided last year. But the TRC says new evidence means it needs to call him. This week's court case was delayed by 24 hours as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, chairman of the TRC, pleaded with Mr Botha to agree to a hearing, possibly in-camera.

Mr Botha's legal team have urged him to concede.

Now it is unlikely that Mr Botha will ever appear before a TRC hearing since the body's statutory period for calling witnesses expires soon. The TRC is due to report to President Nelson Mandela at the end of July.



P.W. Botha yesterday: 'They want to destroy my image and through me to humiliate my people' PHOTOGRAPH: PETER ANDREWS

Botha's foes – a Who's Who of today's South Africa

List reveals measures taken to suppress 'revolutionary leaders'

Alex Duval Smith
in George, Western Cape

A UNIQUE insight into the minds of those who sustained the apartheid regime in the face of mounting opposition in the 1980s is provided by a document from P.W. Botha's court case obtained by the Guardian.

The chart, circulated to nine members of the state security council at a meeting on July 10, 1986, lists the 81 individuals who were then considered the greatest threat to the apartheid regime.

It is not a death list but a

chart, in Africans, similar to a war cabinet's map of the positions of enemy troops. Today, it reads like a Who's Who of the new South Africa.

Those included are, in the words of the minutes of another state security council meeting, singled out under provisions for "the identification and elimination of revolutionary leaders, particularly those with charisma".

They include Nelson Mandela's wife at the time, Winnie Mandela, the trade union leader Cyril Ramaphosa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and a number of people now in prominent

Many of those on the list now hold prominent posts

positions in government or on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

In the words of the state

security council – the inner cabinet which masterminded emergency rule and was chaired by Mr Bo-

tha – all but three of the people listed qualify for "methods other than detention".

The table, which it is believed was updated every month, divided the individuals into six categories according to the measures imposed on them at a given time.

The first category, "detention", includes Mrs Mandela. It also says, in parenthesis, "funds cut off".

The second category, "no detention, under restrictions" lists 10 people including Bhebe Nkomo, an Afrikaans priest who was prominent in the anti-apartheid struggle.

A third category is "no detention, tougher restrictions and Strathmore", the latter being the acronym of the Strategic Com-

munications Operation which targeted individuals for smear campaigns. It lists Dullah Omar, now the justice minister, as "under investigation with a view to detention".

Archbishop Tutu and his deputy on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Alex Boraine, as well as Mr Ramaphosa and President Mandela's doctor, Nathalia Motlana, are targeted solely for Strathmore.

The longest category lists 18 people, including human rights lawyers, under "continuing investigation".

Labour set to lift freeze on public spending

Alex Bremner
in Washington

GORDON BROWN last night signalled that the Government is finally prepared to lift the ceiling on public spending in health and education – ending the freeze on new expenditure it inherited from the Tories.

In a speech to International Monetary Fund policy makers in Washington, the Chancellor made it clear that the Government was prepared to resume investment in public services in those departments which had demonstrated "spending discipline across the board through the elimination of waste and vigorous focus on priorities".

Mr Brown is expected to outline his public spending priorities in the Government's comprehensive spending review in July. But he left no doubt that health and education would be top of the list, providing some much-needed relief in Labour's traditional constituencies.

The Chancellor said that the discipline which had been exerted in certain government departments meant that "we will be able to ensure investment in our key public services, particularly education and health, and in modernising our social and economic fabric".

Mr Brown's decision to lift spending ceilings in health and education as departments start to prepare next year's spending plans – will take the sting out of the assaults of Labour's harshest critics on both left and right. Until now increases in public spending announced in the July 1997 and the March 1998 budgets, such as £500 million to tackle hospital waiting lists in March, have had to be found from existing resources. This has meant draining the Government's contingency reserve dry and moving expenditure from defence and other departments to hospitals and the education system.

Mr Brown refused to lift overall spending, fixed at £332.5 billion for

the current financial year in his spring budget.

But the Chancellor and his aides left no doubt yesterday that in the new public spending round – just getting under way – ministers who had demonstrated an ability to manage their departments' affairs well would be properly rewarded. In particular Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary – once seen as an Old Labour figure – and David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, were praised for the discipline they had exerted over their departments in the face of demands from all sides for more cash.

"Frank Dobson has shown that he can deliver on target and has imposed tight management disciplines over the health service," one official noted.

Mr Brown is also determined that big-spending departments that failed to impose the right disciplines might struggle for new funds, or even see their spending requests slashed.

The Government believes it has some headroom to begin lifting the ceilings on spending because of the improvement in the public finances, with the public sector borrowing requirement projected at just £2.3 billion this year, and closer to balance next, on existing plans.

Mr Brown, who is conducting a crusade at the Washington meetings of the G7, IMF and World Bank for greater transparency in the running of national economies, told fellow finance ministers and central banks he believed that his code for fiscal stability, designed to achieve a more long-term approach to the public finances, was the best way of producing sound economic policies. "It would set out the principles to guide policy and keep the public well-informed about the Government's financial position."

Investment in the public services would be "consistent with both our golden rule of balancing the current budget over the economic cycle and our commitment to keep debt at a stable and prudent level".

'We will be able to ensure investment in our key public services – particularly education and health – and in modernising our social and economic fabric'

Gordon Brown



Right-wing professor brings Diana to book

Luke Harding

A RIGHT-WING philosophy professor takes a sledgehammer to the saintly reputation of Diana, Princess of Wales, in a book published today.

Professor Anthony O'Hear of Bradford University denounces Diana as a symbol of "fake Britain" and says she was a muddled, self-obsessed woman who damaged herself and the monarchy.

Faking it – The Sentimentalisation of Modern Society is published by the right-leaning think-tank, the Social Affairs Unit. This book – which includes essays by academics on politics, art, religion and even eating habits – depicts Britain as a land of sentimentality and self-indulgence.

"Today's Britain is not 'modern', let alone 'cool'. It is

a fake society with fake institutions," say the book's editors. "The society's defining moment was Princess Diana's funeral, in which sentimentality – mob grief – was perverted and canonised, the elevation of feelings above reason, reality and restraint."

In his debunking chapter on Diana, "Queen of Hearts", Professor O'Hear – an education adviser under the Conservatives – castigates her "obsession with her own feelings" and accuses her of a "child-like self-centredness" and a failure to understand her public role. He coins a new term – emotionally correct – to describe Diana's self-regarding choice of good causes to support.

Earl Spencer, Diana's brother, and Kensington Palace refused to comment last night, but charities and Conservative grandees con-

demned the book. "It seems to me a farago of nonsense. The Princess of Wales is one of the great figures of our time," said the former Tory minister, Lord St John of Fawsley. Professor O'Hear was a "desecrated calculating machine" and his opinions "uninformed".

But Peter Mullen, the book's co-editor and an Anglican clergyman in the diocese of York, described Diana as "extremely self-indulgent and infantile. She believed the expression of one's feelings to be the be all and end all." He compared modern Britain to the "Roman Empire in its last days... when it lived on the sentimental recollection of past glories."

Professor O'Hear yesterday described reaction to Diana's death as "possibly the most remarkable, most surprising event of my lifetime". He wanted to understand why so many people got caught up in the emotion.

The philosopher – whose thoughts regularly appear in the opinion pages of the Daily Mail – has previously attacked environmentalists, "indoctrinating" teachers and playwrights who use "decadent" material. He, in turn, has been described by his enemies as Potterish.

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The destruction debate

Forget the Dome: let's mark the millennium with a blitz on ugly buildings — starting with Buckingham Palace, says the Member for Huddersfield: 'Each of us will know of an architectural monstrosity which richly deserves to be eliminated'

Dan Glaister reports



The Bull Ring, Birmingham, hated by many for its bleakness and brutal design

MP's war on sites for sore eyes

WHILE some of the greatest creative minds in the country fret over what to put inside the Millennium Dome at Greenwich, a somewhat cheaper alternative has arrived to help the nation celebrate the end of the century: pull down the ugly buildings plaguing our towns and cities.

The "Millennium Destruction Challenge", proposed by a Labour MP to rid the country of ugly buildings, could prove more popular than any of the more cerebral notions set to fill the Dome.

Britain's towns and cities are riddled with buildings that should never have seen the light of day. But one age's eyesore is another's architectural treasure. The recent past has seen the listing of many buildings, including Centrepiece and Millbank Towers in London, which have previously been reviled for their ugliness.

Barry Sheerman, the MP for Huddersfield — a city whose football stadium was honoured as the 1996 building of the year — announced his crusade by calling for the razing of Buckingham Palace.

"I know this will cause a lot of controversy, but Buckingham Palace is, frankly, ugly and cold, with an unpleasant sort of design. It is not the sort of place you would take to your heart and it should be destroyed," he said.

"We should celebrate the millennium by the removal of some of the worst eyesores from Britain's landscape."

Hit list

- The Bull Ring, Birmingham — and prepare to demolish the planned new Bull Ring to celebrate the millennium.
- St James's shopping centre, Edinburgh — a concrete eyesore in the midst of elegant Edinburgh.
- The Armadillo, Glasgow — a freshly-minted eyesore from Sir Norman Foster.
- Canary Wharf, London, an ugly symbol of contemporary London.
- Millbank Tower
- Tricorn Centre, shoppers' paradise, Portsmouth

Each of us will know of an architectural monstrosity which richly deserves to be eliminated.

His suggestion that some of Britain's ugliest buildings should be replaced with buildings "more in keeping with the 21st century" met with a mixed response. Some observers pointed out that the suggestion had been made regularly throughout the century. Others suggested the first step should be to demolish the centre of Huddersfield.

Stephen Bayley, former artistic director of the Dome, has his own suggestions for demolition. "The Houses of Parliament, but that is for political reasons and not aesthetic ones." The more serious target of his deconstructionist musings was a new house on Chelsea Embankment. "The owner has spent £30 million on some pseudo-Tudorish nonsense. The vulgar is breathtaking."

Philip Dodd, director of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, said: "I would pull down Heathrow airport. It is an ugly, labyrinthine maze. It is the last thing you see when you leave the country and the first one when you arrive and it ought to be imaginative and graceful showing all that is good about Britain."

Two months ago English Heritage came up with a similar initiative, producing a list of tall buildings in London that should be replaced "when the opportunity arises". Its list of buildings that have a "negative effect" on the environment included Euston Tower, Archway Tower, the ICL building and the former headquarters of Mirror Newspapers.



The Armadillo, Glasgow, a new creation from the hand of Sir Norman Foster

the Tricorn is that there is a very strong local movement that wants it listed. There is an old mantra about 1960s buildings: in the sixties people were appalled, in the seventies they questioned them, in the eighties they were ridiculed and in the nineties there is a danger of them being listed.

Additional reporting by Niall Cooper and Lisa Cockrell

Robert Sauters, Grand Master of the Orange Order, with 80,000 members in Northern Ireland, admitted he was unlikely to vote for the deal tomorrow and Orange men make up one eighth of the Ulster Unionist Council.

Blair rides to Trimble's rescue as vote looms

John Mullin in Belfast and Alex Brummer in Washington

TONY BLAIR yesterday stepped in to aid the beleaguered Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, before tomorrow's make-or-break meeting of the party's grassroots on the Stormont peace deal when he said that there were no plans to disband the RUC.

The Prime Minister, speaking soon after Mr Trimble asked Downing Street to clarify key aspects of the settlement to the Ulster Unionist rank-and-file, also sought to ease fears on the accelerated release programme for convicted terrorists.

He said that paramilitary prisoners would be freed on licence only if their organisation remained on ceasefire. Any re-offence would mean an immediate recall to jail.

Mr Blair failed to address the third issue that prompted the Orange Order to reject the deal, the decommissioning of terrorist weapons. Mr Trimble claims Sinn Féin could take up its assembly seats only if the IRA had begun handing in its arms.

Mr Trimble, with little option but to quit if the 860 delegates at the Ulster Unionist Council fail to rubber-stamp the settlement tomorrow, made it clear he thought the deal was the best possible. To vote down the deal would be to hand victory to the IRA.

Gordon Brown is expected today to produce another sweetener for the Stormont deal in a speech at the New York Federal Reserve. The Chancellor will say that the Government intends to introduce a "big economic package" including funds to reduce unemployment and infrastructure projects designed to link investment in the two Irelands. It was not clear last night how much cash Mr Brown would put behind the project.

There was bad news last night when the Ulster Young Unionist Council came out against the peace deal, labelling it "appeasement of terrorism". Its chairman, Peter King, was one of the party's negotiators at Stormont, and its 34 delegates at tomorrow's meeting will be asked to vote against the deal.

Robert Sauters, Grand Master of the Orange Order, with 80,000 members in Northern Ireland, admitted he was unlikely to vote for the deal tomorrow and Orange men make up one eighth of the Ulster Unionist Council.

Jeffrey Donaldson, MP for Lagan Valley, and a former assistant grand master of the Orange Order, struck an ambivalent note in his first interview since the Stormont deal. He admitted that he was unhappy with it but he wanted to avoid a party split.

Mr Donaldson, seen as a future leader, said: "I am not a rebel. I am not against David Trimble. The idea that we have been put around that we are somehow anti-David Trimble is spurious."

Six of the party's 10 MPs are ready to vote against the deal. Those who back Mr Trimble are his deputy, John Taylor, MP for Strangford; Kean Maginnis, MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone; and Cecil Walker, MP for North Belfast.

Mr Trimble was inbaying the delegates hard last night. He believed that the party's ruling body would swing behind the deal. He said: "This party is not going to abandon the opportunity that is there to take advantage of what we succeeded doing in the talks."

Sinn Féin said last night it would wait several weeks before announcing its position on the Stormont deal. It too has a crucial meeting of its grassroots at its annual conference in Dublin this weekend, but it is expected to call a special conference later this month to deal with the settlement.

Gerry Adams, Sinn Féin president, said some activists had tabled motions supporting an unprecedented move for the party to take up its seats in an assembly in Northern Ireland. They would need to be backed by a two-thirds majority, and it could be too risky for the leadership, thought to support the plan, to make that move now.

Letters, page 13



Trimble: to vote down deal would hand victory to IRA

Pol Pot dies a man alone, the blood of millions on his hands

continued from page 1

some time he was close to death, but never expressed remorse, the last foreigners to meet him said yesterday.

"He knew he was about to die," said Japanese filmmaker Naoki Mabuchi. "He was starting to suffer many minor strokes ... but I think until the end he was still very much the same man inside despite everything that had happened."

"It was the situation that had changed, but not him. He blamed the Vietnamese for everything."

Mr Mabuchi met Pol Pot for about 15 minutes in early January. "He was just too sick to speak for very long ... but I think he wanted to say it would be the last time."

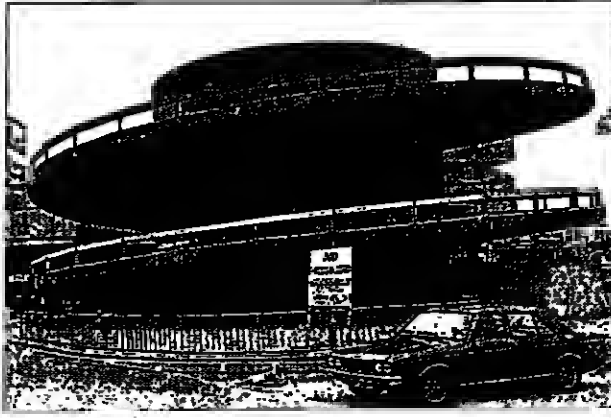
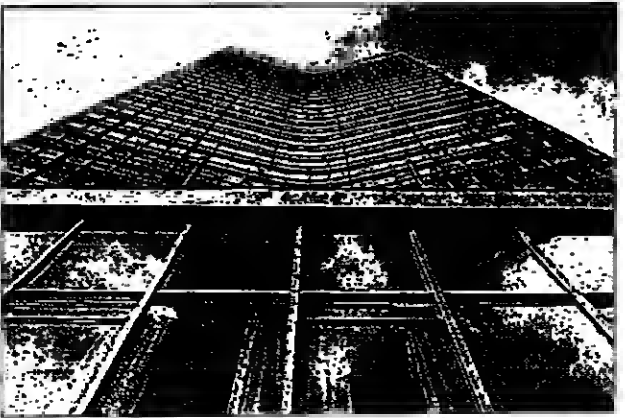
In 1979 Mr Mabuchi was the last foreigner to interview Pol Pot before he disappeared into the jungle near the border with Thailand after the Vietnamese invasion. It was to be more than 18 years before he was seen by outsiders again.

"He spoke in the same direct, softly spoken manner," he said. "He still spoke like the teacher which he once was. This always seemed to make him popular with the younger Khmer Rouge [members]."

Thai reporter Prasit Sangrungsang, who was with Mr Mabuchi in January, remembered Pol Pot trembling and saying: "My political life is finished ... I probably cannot say any more."

Greg Torode is a correspondent of the South China Morning Post.

Leader comment, page 13



Eyesore points ... from left, St James's Centre, Edinburgh, Millbank Tower, London and The Tricorn shopping centre in Portsmouth

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DELL

Women rail at rock star's violent song lyrics



Eric Clapton... One of the tracks on his new album (top left) has angered women's groups **MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: GALLIE LIPKIN**

Stuart Millar

IT IS not often that Eric Clapton is mentioned in the same breath as The Prodigy. But the elder statesman of guitar rock has joined the Essex bad boys on the hitlists of women's groups for lyrics in which he imagines murdering a lover.

At the centre of the storm is the song *Sick and Tired* from Clapton's new album, *Pil-*

grim. In it, he muses about whether he should blow a woman's brains out, singing: "Then you won't bother me no more."

The album is selling well in this country, and is at number 14 in the album charts. But on both sides of the Atlantic, outrage has greeted the song.

In America, there have been protests to the record company. The Boston-based Anti-Defamation League has

called for him to change the lyrics and donate some of the proceeds from the album to violence prevention programmes.

In Britain, refugee organiser Clare Phillipson, of Wearside Women In Need, said: "It is offensive and insensitive. It is too real and too raw for people. We have had to work with children whose mothers have been killed by men because they have been sick and tired of women."

"I disapprove strongly of lyrics like that. It is upholding the level of violence that unfortunately permeates a lot of relationships between men and women."

Chanda Mulenga, vice coordinator of Rights Of Women, said: "It is a situation where someone is promoting violence, then it is very distasteful."

Clapton's American spokeswoman leapt to his defence last night, arguing that the

song's lyric fitted with the blues genre.

The London office of his record label, WEA, refused to comment.

Clapton, aged 53, is one of rock's legends, and has long had a reputation as a womaniser.

Last month, his first response after learning the true identity of his father was to voice his relief that he was the son of a womanising musician rather than a conserva-

Misogynist musos

Tha Prodigy
Banned from Radio 1 and television for Smack My Bitch Up. MPs tabled early day motion claiming posters incited violence against women

□ **Snoop Doggy Dogg**
Gin and Juice: "I
pocket full of rubbers: /
homeboys do too/ So t
the lights and close th
But for what, we don
them been"

☐ Rod Stewart
Maggie Mae: "The women
I've known I wouldn't let tie
my shoes/They wouldn't
give you the time of day"

Debut album *Rattus Norvegicus* condemned as misogynist. Outraged press by performing Nice 'n' Sleazy with strippers.

☐ **The Rolling Stones**
Many numbers to choose from, including the recent "Your tongue licking" way out of place/ I'll rip it out/ I'll stick a gun in your face."

☐ **Jimi Hendrix**
Hey Joe: "I heard you shot
your old lady down/I shot
her down 'cos I caught her
messing round/ With an-
other man"

Fryer made his living by singing and playing the piano in hotel bars, and was married at least four times, fathering two girls and another boy.

Blair turns sights on Middle East

Lucy Ward
Ball-Nogel Correspondent

TONY Blair today embarked on a mission to the Middle East before the Newing international celebration at his triumph in brokering a peace deal in Northern Ireland could help kick-start the stalled peace talks in the region.

With Downing Street eager to talk up his role as peacemaker, the Prime Minister will seek to persuade both Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat to return to the United States-led peace negotiations.

The five-day trip to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel has the blessing of Middle East leaders.

President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, King Hussein of Jordan and former Israeli Labour prime minister Shimon Peres are among the statesmen who have written to congratulate Mr Blair on the Northern Ireland agreement, drawing a direct link with the Middle East conflict.

Nevertheless, Downing Street's upbeat portrayal of Mr Blair's peacemaking track record could be a high risk strategy.

There was no doubt that Israeli-British relations were soured during the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook's visit to the region last month. Lack of time will mean Mr Blair will not visit East Jerusalem

regarded by the Palestinians as their capital — where Mr Cook's trip to — Roma. The British ambassador to the UN, Sir Christopher Meyer, will roll out of a dinner with the Foreign Secretary.

Downing Street was last night anxious to play down any expectations of a breakthrough in the peace process.

Mr Blair's spokesman said: "He is not going to apportion blame. He is not going there to take sides. He is not going to lay down the law. He is going there to do his best to try to help this process forward. He knows too much to do that."

"He knows too, however, that though direct comparisons are not always helpful, the main lesson of Northern Ireland is never stop trying and never stop talking."

Mr Blair, who has engaged in his capacity as President of the European Union president, is concerned that the EU initiative should support and not interfere with the US peace broker efforts.

Mr Blair will concentrate on "narrowing gaps", particularly on economic issues, and lay out a push forward plans to build an airport, seaport and industrial estate in Gaza, stalled amid Israeli demands to control security. He fears that the ports could provide easy entry for terrorists. All are backed with substantial aid from the EU.

In Saudi Arabia, Mr Blair will raise the question of release for the two jailed British nurses, Lucille McCaughan and Deborah Parry.

News in brief

Pop star charged with lewd conduct

POP star George Michael was charged in the US yesterday with lewd conduct, following his arrest on April 7 in a men's lavatory at a Beverly Hills park.

The former Wham! star, aged 34, was ordered to appear in court on May 5, but can be represented by an attorney and is not required to turn up.

The misdemeanor charge carries a maximum six months in jail and \$1,000 (£625) fine upon conviction.

Iraqi girl in hospital

A FOUR-year-old Iraqi leukaemia sufferer was admitted to hospital yesterday for treatment after travelling from her home with George Galloway, Labour MP for Glasgow Kelvin.

Shortly before Mariam Hamza was admitted to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Glasgow, Mr Galloway insisted he was not exploiting her as the row over his actions continued.

He said those who imposed sanctions on Iraq were the ones whose morality was dubious. "I am trying to save the life of a child who would otherwise die."

Briton found dead in China

A BRITISH businessman has been found dead in China, British embassy officials said yesterday. The body of the man, who has not been identified, was found in a flat in the city of Qingdao, south-east of Beijing.

He is believed to have been killed last week. An embassy spokesman said two Chinese people had been seen running from the flat on the night he died.

The death comes one month after an American engineer was killed in a hotel room in Guangdong province.

17 treated in cancer recall

SEVENTEEN women are being treated for breast cancer after 1,000 patients were recalled for a second mammogram by the Fumbleside breast screening service in January. Checks showed that their original X-rays were not as clear as they should have been.

Hospital chiefs have admitted that of the 17 women with cancer, it may have been possible to detect the disease in six of the original mammograms. The other 11 have developed cancer following the first screening. Their initial X-rays showed no signs of abnormality.

Ian Gallows, medical director at the Royal Hull Hospitals NHS Trust, which manages the breast screening service, apologised to the women concerned. "We have acted swiftly to ensure they receive the best possible treatment."

Information chief leaves

THE Lord Chancellor's head of information, Sheila Thompson, is to leave her job on May 1, joining an exodus of departmental information heads following Labour's election victory. Ms Thompson is considering options in the private PR sector. Tony Blair's deputy press secretary, Allan Percival, will join the department before the end of April in a new, expanded post of director of communications. — *Glasz Durr*

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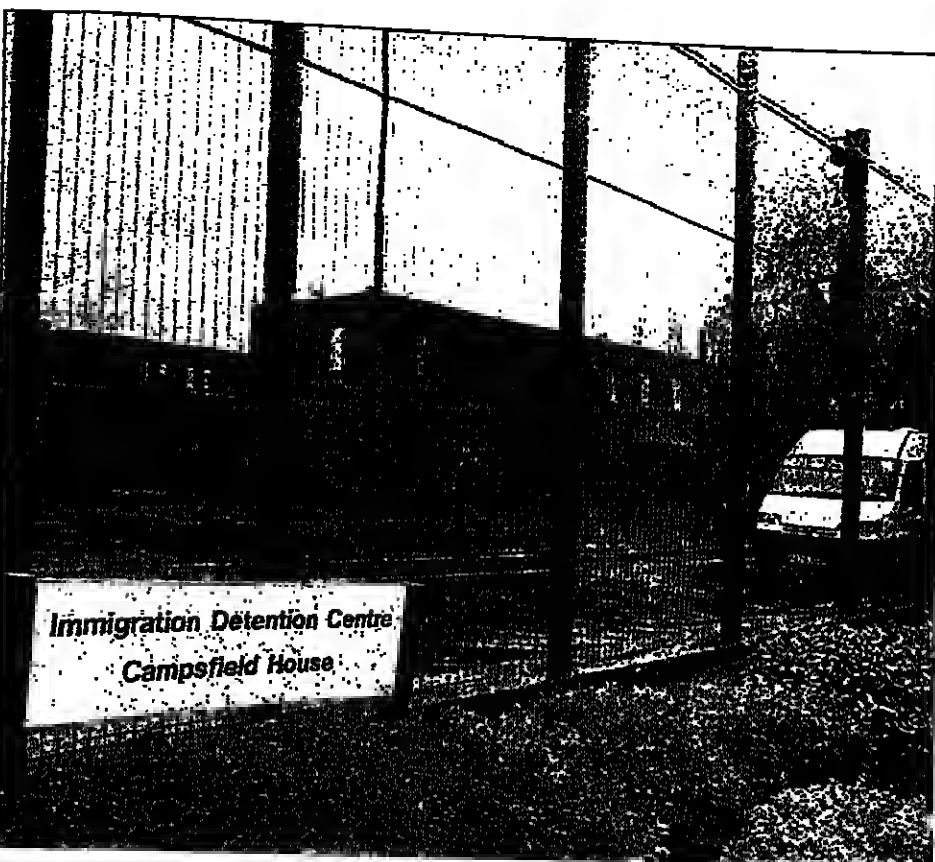
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Report offers strong criticism of Campsfield House • Minister announces changes, but congratulates security firm for 'good work'

Group 4 to keep asylum centre role



Immigration Detention Centre
Campsfield House



A detainee at Campsfield House (seen above left) looks out of the Oxfordshire centre, which has been strongly criticised

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

GROUP 4 security is to run the riot-hit Campsfield House detention centre for asylum seekers for another three years, despite a critical official inspection report published yesterday.

The Home Office minister, Mike O'Brien, flanked by the directors of two private prison companies, congratulated Group 4 for doing a "good job in difficult circumstances" at the largest centre — Campsfield House in Oxfordshire — where there have been two riots in the last four years.

Mr O'Brien went on to confirm that the Government intends to build more private detention centres to increase substantially the number of asylum seekers and illegal entrants held in Britain. The centres are also to lose their

status as "secure hostels" and a new regime of sanctions and incentives introduced to control disruptive detainees. They are to be treated more like unconvicted prisoners.

The response came as the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Sir David Ramsbotham, published the official inquiry report, which warns that the 900-place detention system is overloaded and says only a fraction of those who should be detained were being held.

As a consequence, when the total number of available detention spaces is full, people who may be illegally in the United Kingdom, arbitrarily go free," said the report. "It is clear, too, that threat of detention is not an effective deterrent to those who seek to enter the country illegally."

Mr O'Brien, who attacked "high profile" pressure groups who had made "wild" allegations against Group 4, asserted that as many detention places would be built as

were needed to ensure that the policy was no longer applied arbitrarily.

The chief inspector's report endorses an expansion in the number of detention centres but specifically said it should be done to reduce greatly the proportion of the 400 detainees being held in prisons.

The Government's response disappointed human rights groups, refugee organisations, and local campaigners who have been calling for Campsfield's closure.

Amnesty International voiced concern that the minister had failed to act on the recommendation that judges and not immigration officers should decide who is held.

"Despite the Government's repeated claim that detention is used only as a last resort, many of these desperate people are locked up before their case is heard," said Amnesty's refugee officer, Jan Shaw.

Suke Wolton, of the Close Campsfield Campaign, a local pressure group, said: "The idea that we should increase the number of people detained when we are already breaking a human rights convention is an outrage."

But Mr O'Brien rejected

claims by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees that Britain's detention policy breached the European Convention on Human Rights. "We have looked at this carefully and we are absolutely sure we comply," Sir David said that the detention centres had been set up in the belief that detainees would be held no more than six weeks — but instead they were often held for more than a year. It meant the idea that they should be secure hostels with barred windows and high fences but few controls

over the people inside had been undermined.

"It is frankly unsound and unsafe to hold people within a secure perimeter without clear rules governing their behaviour, and without statutory duties and obligations being imposed on the staff who look after them. It is the lack of clear rules and sanctions which is at the heart of the problems facing contracted detention centre staff. Until they are established, the prospect of repeat disturbances at Campsfield House remains."

Key proposals

- Threat of detention is not an effective deterrent to illegal entrants.
- Judges, not immigration officers, must authorise detention, with reasons given in writing.
- Threat of renewed rioting at "unsafe" detention centres in absence of system of sanctions to control detainees' behaviour. The centres should no longer be seen as "secure hostels".
- "Pleasant but aimless atmosphere" at the biggest centre, Campsfield House, near Oxford. Group 4 doing "good job in difficult circumstances".
- Detention is regrettable necessity, but system is overloaded.

Funding reform attacked

There is no way to buy a gong, Dixons chief tells Neill inquiry

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

SIR Stanley Kalms, chairman of the retail chain Dixons, yesterday launched a bitter attack on any reform of party funding, warning that to be forced to limit or declare political donations was an interference with the "inviolable rights of all citizens."

The Conservative Party donor told Lord Neill's inquiry into party funding that he believed he had the right to give as much money and lobby whoever he liked without any invasion of privacy.

He also attacked the committee for even suggesting, in a discussion document, that because he was a party donor he should be ruled out from receiving political honours. He accused them of seeking the "permanent branding of a citizen" and of suggesting he should be "denied recognition because of support for a political party". He defended the

honours system, insisting there was no evidence that peerages and knighthoods could be bought, and said he had found claims that he had been "going for a title" very offensive.

He said that "gongs, Ks or peerages" were in the main awarded to people who had made a significant contribution to public life. "There is no reason to change the system. You don't repair something that works well."

However, he disclosed that his own company, which used regularly to finance the Tories, has decided to end party donations altogether.

"Times move on," he said. "One has the feeling those days have gone, but it is a personal decision."

He put the blame on politicians for causing an atmosphere of political sleaze by not being "robust enough" if they agreed to see businessmen.

He cited Tony Blair's involvement with a £1 million political donation from the



Sir Stanley Kalms: found claims offensive

Formula One motor racing chief, Bernie Ecclestone.

"This is an uncomfortable example. I would admit that prima facie there is a certain amount of discomfort about this example," he said.

The dispute over Mr Ecclestone also grew yesterday when a Labour MP warned Lord Neill at the hearing that it risked creating a "sleaze democracy" by compromising the integrity of his party.

Martin Linton, MP for Battersea and a former Guardian journalist, accused both the Labour and Conservative parties of an "unhealthy reliance" on wealthy donors to fund their activities.

He backed the case for more state funding and tax credits to improve the parties' finances. "The alternative is a sleaze democracy, where the parties are forced into an unhealthy reliance on funding from private individuals which will sooner or later compromise their integrity — for example, Bernie Ecclestone," he said.

He also referred to large payments made to the Tories, such as the donation from fugitive tycoon Asil Nadir before the collapse of his Polly Peck business empire.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life disclosed yesterday that Lord Neill's office had written to Mr Ecclestone again, suggesting that if he still wished to give evidence he was "very welcome to do so."

The secretariat has pointed out that there are free times at the beginning of next month for him to give evidence.

Hue and cry over asparagus rustlers

Mail Couper

LINCOLNSHIRE fields of asparagus have been placed under 24 hour surveillance by a supermarket chain this week, amid fears that modern day rustlers are on the prowl.

Tesco took the measure after last weekend's floods

devastated rival fields of the same crop.

The company fears that as the price soars — at present it is £1.99 for 10 spears — petty criminals will be drawn to easy pickings in its fields.

A spokesman for Tesco said: "It is causing concern to our suppliers, some of whom already suspect they

have been victims of rustlers."

He added: "We had to take these measures. An open field is such an easy target."

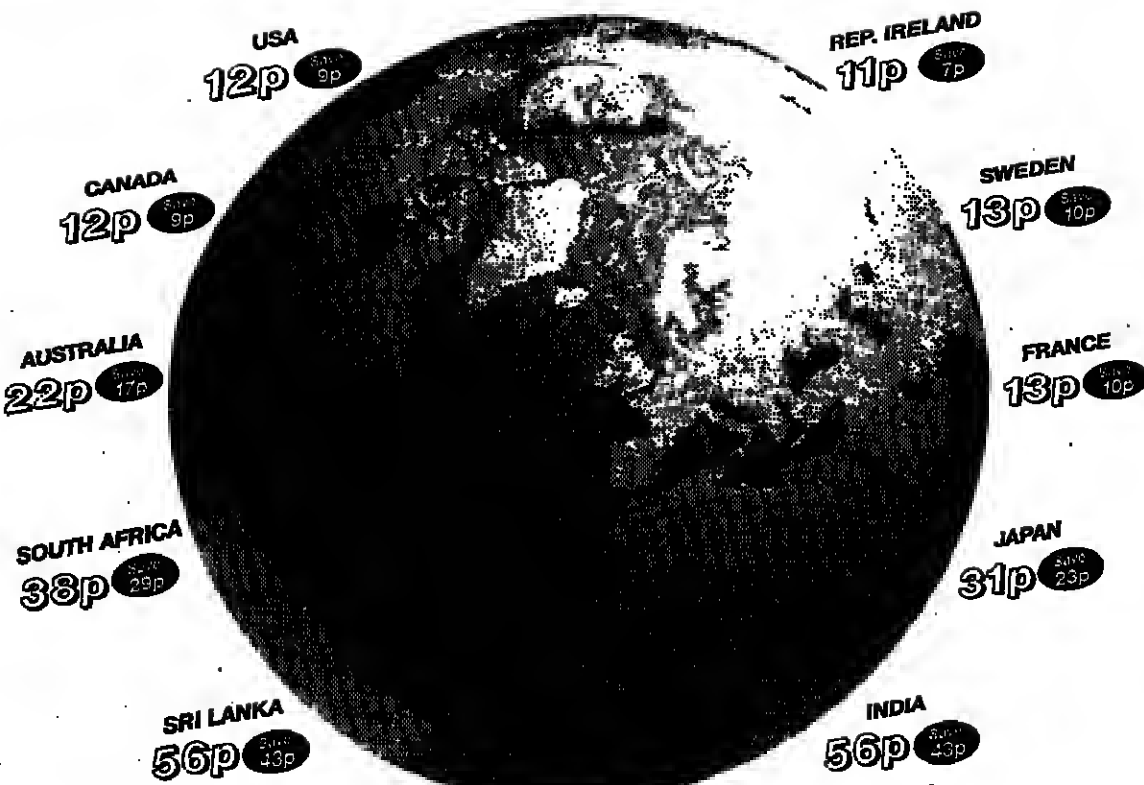
"This has happened before with potatoes. In one case, a farmer had half a field taken in one night."

Tesco's concern has puzzled the National Farmers

Union. Trevor Hayes, of its insurance department, said: "Rustling is normally an issue of cattle. Christmas trees sometimes go missing, but I have never heard of any claims about asparagus."

But he conceded that not all farmers were covered against theft and there could be a risk.

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Recently, I've veered more into the realms of restaurant criticism — a vital role for any real writer in these pivotal times.

Bel Littlejohn

Comment, page 13

'Behaviour of some so unacceptable it damages the life chances of their children and the ability of teachers to teach'

Blunkett attacks negligent parents

Vivek Chaudhary
Education Correspondent

SOME parents refuse to discipline their children for behaving badly in school and are damaging their life chances, Education and Employment Secretary David Blunkett said yesterday.

His stinging attack on parents who fail to control their children came at the National Association of Schoolmasters' Union of Women Teachers conference in Scarborough, where he said the ability of teachers to teach was being undermined by a small minority of parents who failed to discipline their children.

Mr Blunkett said afterwards that the Crime and Disorder Bill going through Parliament would force parents to take parenting classes if their children continually broke legal orders such as refusing to attend school.

He told delegates: "The behaviour of some [parents] is so unacceptable that it damages the life chances of their children and the ability of [teachers] to teach those children. Unacceptable behaviour needs to be tackled wherever it is."

Mr Blunkett also called for earlier intervention to help badly behaved children who, he said, have badly behaved

children themselves and become caught in a vicious circle. "We need the earliest intervention to ensure that youngsters causing mayhem don't disrupt the education of other children."

Mr Blunkett later said: "I have had head teachers who tell me that every time they take on youngsters they have parents who abuse them, verbally and physically, setting an example which damages the credibility of teachers."

"We need to look at how we can be as tough as nails on parents who don't accept that they have responsibility for the life chances of that child."

Mr Blunkett's attack was welcomed by delegates and Nigel de Gruchy, the union general secretary, who claimed members refuse to teach an average of 50 disruptive pupils each year, often facing abuse from parents.

Mr Blunkett told the conference that pupils with behavioural and emotional problems did not fall into this category and should not be dumped into schools with few resources to deal with them.

He claimed the policy to integrate such pupils into mainstream schools led to more disruption in classrooms.

He said: "We don't expect teachers to be social workers, we expect teachers to teach."

Delegates were told that Government was anxious to avoid industrial action by teachers and was willing to do all it could to tackle bureaucracy and excessive paperwork in schools.

The NASUWT and the National Union of Teachers have voted in favour of industrial action over teachers' workload and bureaucracy, which they claim prevent them from teaching in class.



Education Secretary David Blunkett and his private secretary, Katie Farrington, take a walk before his conference speech. PHOTOGRAPH: TONY BARTHOLOMEW

Mr Blunkett said a circular would be issued to head teachers over the next few days outlining how they can cut red tape and he would recover a working group of teaching unions to write it.

He said: "It's a common sense solution to a genuine problem. If it helps us to achieve our targets [in education] then it's in the best interests of every one of us."

The NASUWT action, due to begin in two weeks, does not involve striking but is based around measures such as limiting after-school meetings to one a week and restricting teachers' reports to parents to 400 words.

Mr de Gruchy said his union would be willing to withdraw from industrial action if the circular contained "all the right things".

Mr Blunkett also announced that 23 million would be given to help provide 9,000 teachers and head teachers with laptops.

Delegates were urged to clamp down on bullying teachers, who often bully colleagues. One woman claimed she was accused of sleeping with a colleague by a bullying head teacher who systematically bullied other members of staff. Other delegates claimed many teachers suffered from stress and illness because of senior teachers who bullied them.

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Sex War simmers in the kitchen

Amelia Gentleman

DESPITE feminism and the popularity of "girl power", women are still finding it hard to escape from the kitchen, according to research showing that the nation's cooking is still overwhelmingly done by women.

More than 90 per cent of women questioned in the BBC Good Food Magazine's survey of the country's cooking habits said they prepared supper every night for their husbands or partners, while a mere 20 per cent of men said they cooked on a nightly basis and 23 per cent said they would never do so for their wives or girlfriends.

However, two-thirds of the men said they cooked for their partners on a reasonably regular basis, and 94 per cent felt confident enough to whip up a whole meal if necessary.

But while 7 per cent of women said they had been reduced to tears when cooking for just 1 per cent of men had similarly sobbed.

A spokeswoman for the feminist organisation Rights of Women was unsurprised by the findings.

"This is a depressing reminder of how much there is to be done. If we don't have equality in such basic areas as washing-up and cooking, it becomes difficult to address more serious and wider issues. We need to work harder at breaking down barriers between what is seen as women's work and men's work."

The study also found that most British cooks are shy about subjecting friends to their cooking. Although 95 per cent said they could easily create an entire meal for themselves, most said they would never risk cooking for guests.

The magazine's editor, Orlando Murrin, commented: "Undoubtedly culinary standards have improved enormously, but when guests are added to the mix, most people seem to experience something resembling stage fright."

Snouts out as police convert informants into 'sources'

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

THEY have had many names — snout, grass, snitch, nerk, rat, squealer, canary — but now they may have a new one. Police informants could soon find themselves being repack-

aged with a more user-friendly description.

A national conference of 150 detectives yesterday discussed the benefits of coming up with something a little more positive — and in future people who pass on information could be reborn as "agents" or "sources".

"There was a discussion as to whether 'informant' was the right name because of its connotations," said Roy Penrose, the head of the new National Crime Squad which represented the crime committee of the Association of Chief Police Officers at the conference in Lincolnshire. The mood of the conference was for a change with "agent"

or "source" being two of the most favoured suggestions.

"We had to look at the psychological side of it and ask whether that [a different name] would help them to feel more part of the team," said Mr Penrose.

The police are increasingly dependent on paid informants to provide intelligence on or-

ganised crime and are anxious that people should not be put off because of derogatory terms.

It also emerged in the conference that there are around 500 juvenile informants assisting the police. Guidelines for how to handle the issue of teenagers were looked at.

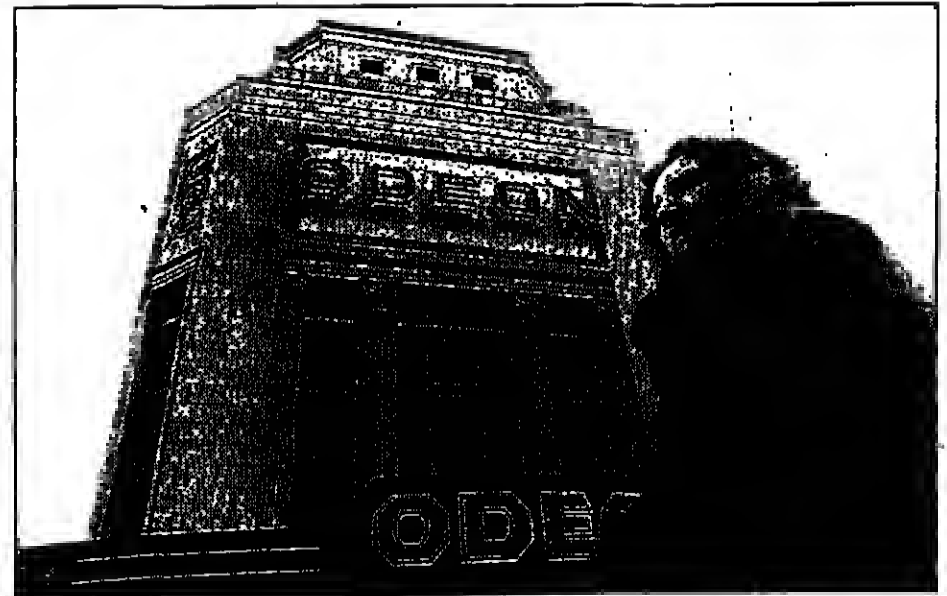
Mr Penrose said that al-

though 500 might seem a high figure, it should be balanced against the high proportion of crime — around 40 per cent — committed by young offenders.

Uniformed officers, who are most likely to encounter those able to give information, might also receive special training in the handling of "sources" if conference suggestions are adopted.

Whatever their name, informants have an ancient pedigree. Jonathan Wild, the 18th century master-informer who was known as Thief-taker-General, lived a life of luxury. His exploits are chronicled in John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*.

Cinema design classic ditched



Kamal Ahmed
Media Correspondent

ONE of the design classics of the 20th century — the Odeon sign in red neon lights — is to be abandoned by the cinema chain as part of a £30 million redesign.

The sign and Odeon logo, launched in the 1930s, will be replaced by more modern silver lettering which the company said would lay to rest the dead-pit image of cinemas which the industry has been trying to shake off for more than 10 years.

"The old sign has a hint of the 1970s about it and that is a negative image in some people's mind," said Ross Jones, marketing manager of Odeon Cinemas. "We want Odeon to occupy the high ground in cinema, like BMW

does in the motor industry."

The decision was criticised by members of the design and cinema community who accused Odeon, Britain's oldest cinema chain, of ditching a "senior position" with the unlisted Odeon Leicester Square, but was unsuccessful. "The neo sign and lighting which picked out parts of the building were part of the architecture," he said. "To change that approach is a shame."

Odeon has shut its Leicester Square cinema for a revamp as part of the redesign. It will reopen in the summer.

As well as replacing the red logo on the 12th floor, the cinema will have a stars' balcony overlooking the square which will be used for premieres. The interior will see many of the 1930s elements, such as the flying lady plaster figures, restored.

The changes are part of a overhaul of the Odeon's 76 cinemas over the next two years to take advantage of the huge growth in cinema audiences over the past decade. Multiplexes are being built in Liverpool, Blackpool, Kilmarnock in Ayrshire and Maidstone in Kent.

Mr Jones denied the company, which became part of the Rank Group in the 1940s, was abandoning more than 50 years of history. "The Odeon's heritage is very important to us all. But we also want to show we are going forward."

The first Odeon was opened in 1930 in Ferry Barr, Birmingham, by Oscar Deutsch, the son of Jewish immigrants born in the city in 1883. He wanted an opulent cinema chain and developed the "Odeon style" which became a standard bearer for the art deco period.

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Credits roll as red neon Odeon sign fades away



A new Odeon in Kettering, which opened in December 1997, and (top left) the old Odeon sign. PHOTOGRAPH (LEFT): FRANK BARON

Inquiry into jail adviser's new Group 4 job

Luke Harding

THE civil servant responsible for designing the regime of secure training centres for juvenile offenders has been offered a job by Group 4.

The appointment of Malcolm Stevens is so sensitive it has been referred to the Cabinet Office for approval.

Whitehall guidelines restrict senior civil servants from jumping from the public to the private sector through the so-called revolving door, the well-trodden route taken by former Conservative

ministers on to the boards of companies they helped to privatise.

Mr Stevens, a Home Office official, was responsible for drawing up the tendering arrangements which allowed private companies to run the new regime of "child jails", originally proposed by the Conservatives.

Just before the general election Group 4 successfully won the contract to operate Britain's first secure training centre at Medway in Kent.

Although the scheme was vigorously attacked by Labour in opposition, in office the Home Secretary,

Jack Straw, said it would be too expensive to cancel.

The centre accepts its first 12- to 14-year-old criminal "trainee" later today.

Mr Stevens has been offered a "senior position" with Group 4. He recently left the civil service because of poor health, it is understood.

Group 4 has also won the lucrative contract to run a second secure training centre in Onley, Northamptonshire. It is expected Mr Stevens will advise Group 4 on how to secure the contract for a third training centre, already approved for Medomsley, Co Durham.

The new centres will eventually cost more than £30 million a year to run.

"The job offer has caused raised eyebrows," a Home Office source said yesterday. "His entire job in the Prison Service was to advise the Home Office and Department of Health about who should be placed in secure units. It is one thing to get information as a civil servant. It is another to use it for commercial advantage. If he had gone on to join a utility this would be a matter for the regulator."

A spokeswoman for Group 4 yesterday confirmed that Mr Stevens had been offered a

senior position but said his appointment was subject to Cabinet Office approval. "We strongly adhere to Cabinet Office procedure," she added. Sources at Group 4 complained that the firm was damned if it recruited people with expertise and damned if it took on inexperienced staff, compounding its reputation for amateurism.

Mr Stevens began his career in probation before moving to the Department of Health as a civil servant. He was later seconded to the Home Office and the prison department, where he became a specialist on "very serious"

juvenile offenders. He was also involved in the case of Mary Bell, the 11-year-old jailed 30 years ago for the manslaughter of two boys aged three and four.

The Government has decided to press ahead with the secure training centres, which have been dubbed "colleges of crime", despite strong opposition. Group 4 hopes that its "brisk and busy" regime at Medway will help stop very young offenders, most of whom will have notched up more than 50 burglaries and car thefts, from continuing their lives of crime.

A Scotland Yard spokesman said yesterday that the confirmed yesterday that the officer, based in west London, had been questioned. He was arrested on Wednesday during an investigation into racist material sent to officers of Asian origin. Abusive letters had been sent and racist material distributed through the internal mail to officers from ethnic minorities.

Chief Inspector Andrew Harvis, who is leading the inquiry, said in a statement: "The commissioner has made it quite clear that racism in the service in any shape or form will not be tolerated."

Asian officer arrested in police race-hate inquiry

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

AN ASIAN police officer has been arrested and suspended from duty in connection with an investigation into a race-hate campaign.

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Nuclear to Than

Nobody really knows whether or not this stuff will cause any harm

Tories expect council gains

Defence Correspondent

THE Conservative Party is expected to gain a significant number of seats in the upcoming local elections, according to a new poll.

The poll, conducted by a leading opinion pollster, shows the Tories leading in 15 out of 20 council areas.

The Labour Party is expected to lose ground in several key areas, including London and the Midlands.

The results are seen as a boost for the Tories ahead of the general election.

Analysts predict a narrow victory for the Tories in the upcoming elections.

The poll also indicates a shift in voter sentiment towards the Tories.

The results are expected to be announced in the coming weeks.

The Tories are expected to focus on their strengths in the upcoming campaign.

The Labour Party is expected to target key areas for improvement.

The poll is seen as a barometer for the upcoming general election.

The Tories are expected to maintain their lead in the upcoming elections.

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The Guardian Friday April 17 1998

BRITAIN 7

Aldermaston weapons plant seeks permission for one-off discharge of radioactive tritium waste, an element linked to birth defects

Nuclear risk to Thames

Paul Brown
Environment Correspondent

PERMISSION to dump two tanks of radioactive waste into the River Thames is being sought by the nuclear warhead manufacturing plant at Aldermaston in Berkshire.

The one-off discharge from storage tanks on site would increase 20-fold the permitted limit of tritium allowed to be piped into the Thames at Pangbourne.

Water from the river is siphoned off to be used for drinking in London.

The proposal is part of a new application to the Environment Agency to vary discharges from Aldermaston into the river, air and sewage systems surrounding the plant where Trident nuclear warheads are made and old weapons dismantled.

How two 50 cubic metre tanks came to contain liquid tritium waste is an official secret and both the Environment Agency and the privatised Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) refuse to discuss it.

But under new rules which have removed Crown immunity since privatisation, the

'Nobody really knows whether or not this stuff will cause any harm'

because they have done it in the past is not an excuse to let them do it in the future. Nobody really knows whether or not this stuff will cause any harm.

David Rendel, Liberal Democrat MP for Newbury, said: "There have been a lot of radiation issues in Newbury since 1990, especially with the leukaemia clusters. If the current levels are realistic, a proposed 20-fold increase is very concerning."

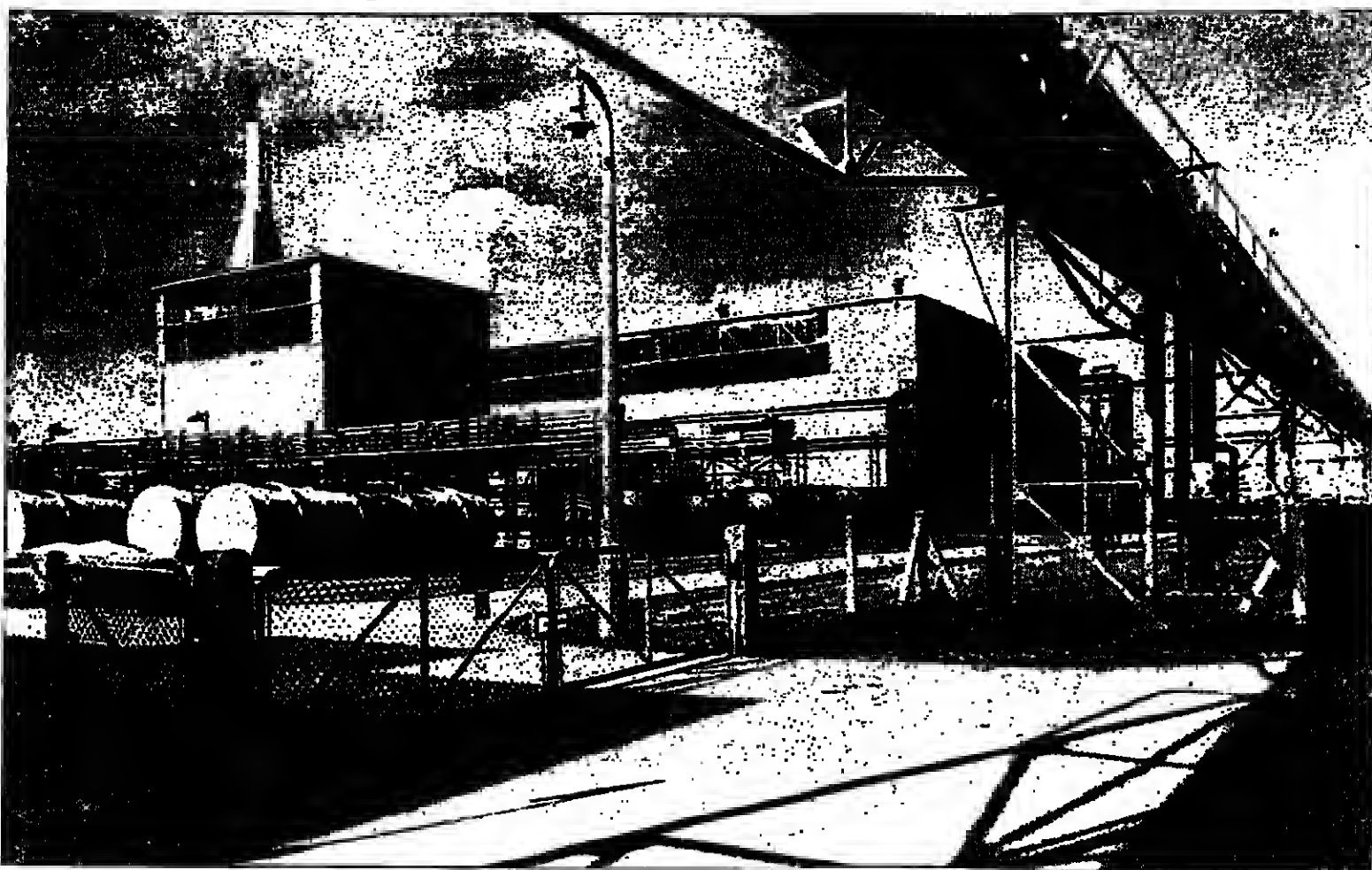
Graham Hammond of AWE said overall discharges would be reduced. The emptying of the tanks was a one-off. The Environment Agency would study the 69 pages of detailed proposals and ask questions. Peter Bremner, the Environment Agency's regulator in the Thames region, said the application was to ease decommissioning of old buildings and old weapons as well as the making of new ones. Each element in the proposal would be examined in detail before public consultation in the autumn.

application for a new licence to discharge must be put out to public consultation and for the first time local people will be allowed to object.

Among the objectors will be the Nuclear Awareness Group which is already concerned about child deaths from leukaemia and associated cancers which are five times above the national average at nearby Newbury.

Evelyn Parker, a spokeswoman for the group, said she was concerned with the proposals. "In humans tritium has been linked to damage to DNA, potentially resulting in Down's syndrome and other birth defects. It is also linked to testicular cancer."

Local councillor Tony Ferguson, who sits on the AWE liaison committee, said: "Just



The weapons plant at Aldermaston... The proposal to discharge tritium into the Thames at Pangbourne will increase permitted levels 20-fold

Tories expect council gains

David Honeke
Westminster Correspondent

THE Conservatives predicted yesterday they would make their first big gains in the suburbs since their leader, William Hague, promised a "fresh future" after their shattering defeat at last year's general election.

Sir Norman Fowler, the party's environment spokesman, promised gains in next month's local elections in the London boroughs of Barnet, Brent, Bexley and Croydon, and to keep the Westminster and Wandsworth flagships.

But he was coy about winning elsewhere. Notably, he did not predict big gains in Liberal Democrat strongholds in Richmond, Sutton and Kingston or in the shire districts outside the capital.

He was also quiet about whether the party would benefit from a split between New and Old Labour in the London borough of Enfield — which returned its first ever Labour MP, Stephen Twigg, when he defeated Michael Portillo last May.

Sir Norman announced a new party policy to crack down on abuses of power by councils. Independent committees should be set up to

monitor their work. "If there were concerns that expenses were being charged, trips being taken — some of the things that have come up in the last few months — then they could be dealt with very rapidly."

Lord Parkinson, the party chairman, said the Tories had been re-organising since May. "We're sorting ourselves out. We've made tremendous progress in the last few months internally and organisationally. But it's pretty early days," he said at the launch of the party's campaign.

However, Hilary Armstrong, the local government minister, said: "The Tories say they have learned the lessons of their general election defeat, but their record in local government shows this is just not true. Just 16 days ago boundary changes put the Tories in charge in Essex county council, and the Tories priority was to cut education spending by 23 million, social services by 23 million and spend more money on roads."

Council seats are up for election in 36 metropolitan councils, 32 London boroughs, 10 all-purpose authorities and 68 shire districts — involving about 50 million voters across England.

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The Guardian

Arrested in late inquiry

A life that weighed 2m deaths

Cambodians find it hard to believe Pol Pot is dead, writes Nick Cumming-Bruce

SATISFACTION at the death of Pol Pot was absent from the streets of the Cambodian capital yesterday, as was any hint of regret in the strange scenes unfolding round the corpse stretched out by his former followers near the Thai border.

Such public reticence marks the diminishing influence his Khmer Rouge has on daily life in Cambodia — and the depth of the scars he inflicted on his people.

"How do I know he's dead," asked a Phnom Penh motor-cycle taxi driver. "But when I heard he might be dead, it reminded me of my six brothers and sisters who were killed during the Pol Pot regime."

Cambodia will not swiftly digest the death of the former school teacher, known for his

charm, who became in the words of his former prisoner King Norodom Sihanouk, "one of the most terrible monsters ever created by humanity".

His death at the age of 72 lifts from his countrymen the shadow of a tyranny that earned him a place alongside Stalin and Mao Zedong as one of the 20th century's most potent icons of terror.

In contrast to their epic careers, Pol Pot needed the less than four years after marching to power in Phnom Penh in 1975 to unleash a holocaust that made the rice fields of this once sleepy Asian backwater synonymous with genocide.

Cambodia's plunge into carnage did not start with Pol Pot. Psychiatrists treating the



'The Jewish people's search for justice didn't end with the death of Hitler, and the Cambodian people's search for justice didn't end with the death of Pol Pot'

Bones on display at one of Pol Pot's killing fields
PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD VOGEL

psychosis that still cripples untold numbers of Cambodians find themselves working through layers of trauma: the brutal experience of American bombing, the devastation of escalating war.

But there is hardly a family untouched by the reign of Khmer Rouge terror that caused the deaths of some 2 million people — between a quarter and a third of the population.

Pol Pot, of course, never accepted the accusation. "Mistakes" was how he summed up the slaughter in the rare interviews he gave shortly after he lost power, and again last year when the bosses of the already much depleted Khmer Rouge submitted him to the humiliation of a show trial.

"I came to carry out the struggle, not to kill people," he said on that occasion.

"To say that millions died is too much."

His recollection hardly squares with the findings of researchers who, in recent years have extensively, if not exhaustively, mapped the mass graves of his victims and traced through documents an elaborate network of death camps created to purge his enemies, real or imaginary.

Little wonder then that to

many Cambodians simple death is too easy a fate for Pol Pot.

"The Jewish people's search for justice didn't end with the death of Hitler, and the Cambodian people's search for justice didn't end with the death of Pol Pot," said Dith Pran, the press interpreter and guide whose survival and escape from Pol Pot's rule was told in David Puttnam's film *The Killing Fields*.

"If he really is dead, it's not the end yet," said Youk Chhang, director of the genocide documentation centre in Phnom Penh. "There is still more to do."

Such feelings help to explain some of the suspicion that will linger round Pol Pot's death.

It came conveniently at the moment when Washington was considering the possibility of bringing him to trial for

his crimes against humanity. An Asian street-gang member, Tak Tan, was found guilty in Los Angeles yesterday of murdering Haing Ngor, a Cambodian who survived the killing fields to star as Dith Pran in David Puttnam's film of that name, and who died in a robbery outside his US home in 1996.

Leader comment, page 8; Obituary, page 14

UN chief unveils blueprint to end African conflicts

Victoria Brittain

THE United Nations secretary-general, Kofi Annan, yesterday unveiled a plan for Africa which could bring an end to wars and stabilisation activity in at least seven countries: Angola, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Mr Annan is expected to announce today that he is pulling out his human rights investigative team from the former Zaire. Months of attempted investigation of killings in the eastern part of the country have been lost in wrangling between the UN team and Congolese officials.

Mr Annan's demand for neutrality in refugee camps, and for them to be moved away from borders, is a tacit recognition that the UN refugee agency failed badly in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, when it allowed its camps to be used for the rearming of Hutu extremists.

The recommendation on ending blanket economic sanctions and instead freezing the assets of decision-makers may provide the US and British governments with a way out of their increasingly isolated position on maintaining sanctions against Iraq and Libya.

Few African governments will be happy at the prospect of reducing their arms budgets but most will be happy with Mr Annan's proposed squeeze on farms traders.

by President Clinton's recent visit. UN officials hope that both African and Western countries will find it impossible to ignore its challenges.

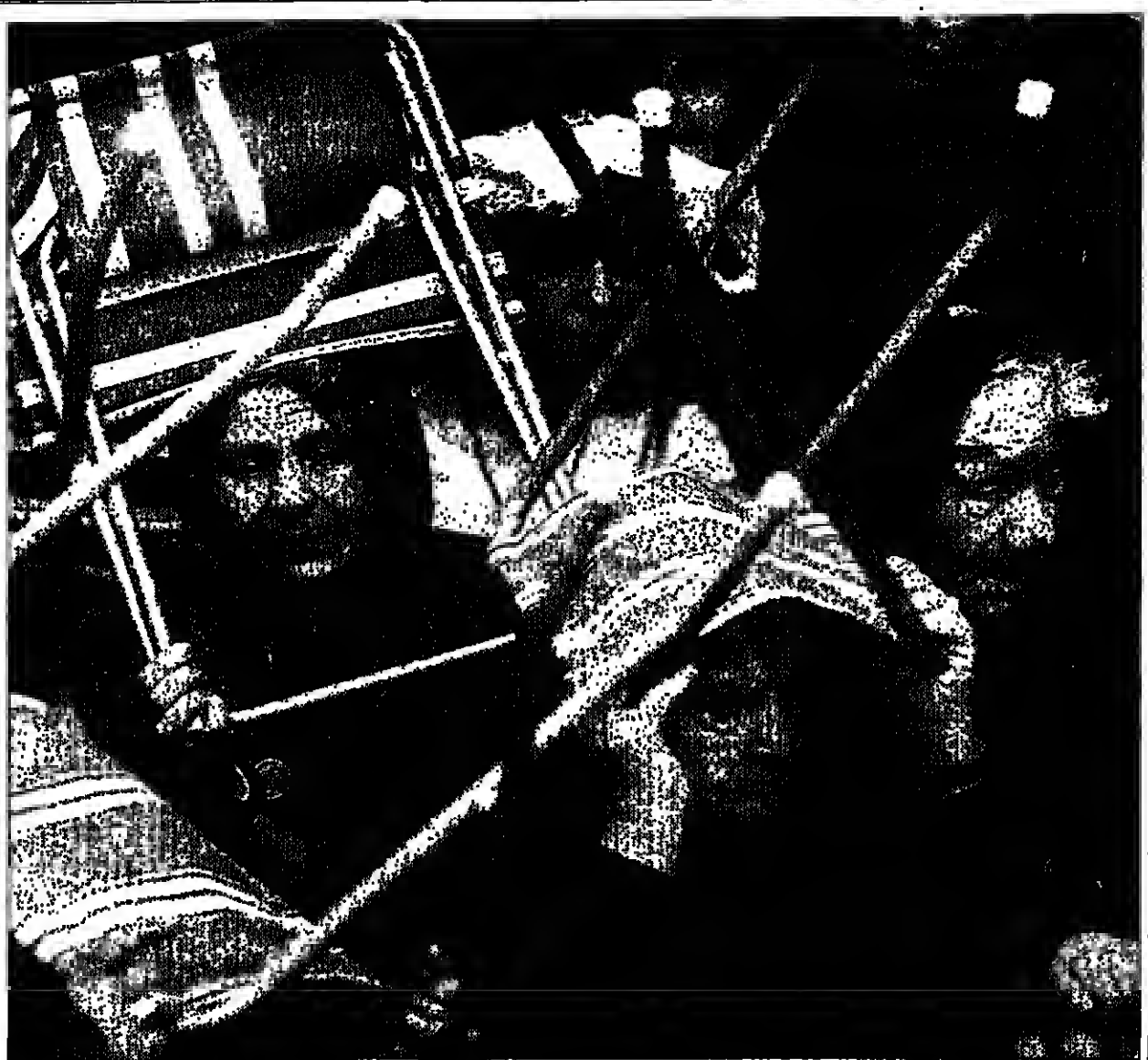
The UN itself is already clearly accepting the report's call for different practices and an open admission of failures.

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Greek Orthodox Christians shelter from a thunderstorm during a feet-washing ceremony in Jerusalem's Old City ahead of the Orthodox Easter. Earlier a bolt of lightning hit a mosque next door, showering the Christian worshippers with stone fragments and causing some to shout 'Miracle' and 'Jesus is coming'

News in brief

Nigeria's main party votes for Abacha

NIGERIA'S ruling United Nigeria Congress Party yesterday adopted military ruler General Sani Abacha as its candidate for the August presidential election, the party said.

The UNCP took more than 65 per cent of seats at the last national election in December for state assemblies and is one of four out of five registered parties that proposed Gen Abacha, aged 54, as a single consensus candidate.

Gen Abacha has not said if he will stand for the presidency, but he is believed to want to retain power after his promised restoration of democracy in October. — Reuters, Kaduna.

Attempt to free aid workers

THE International Committee of the Red Cross said yesterday it had been told that clan leader Mohammed Ali Mahdi was trying to win the release of 10 aid workers being held in Somalia.

The ICRC called for the nine foreigners and Somali engineer to be freed and said it was withdrawing seven remaining expatriate staff, pending an end to the crisis. The 10 workers kidnapped from an airstrip north of Mogadishu on Wednesday, include seven ICRC workers and two other foreign aid staff. — Reuters, Geneva.

Fault grounds space zoo

A FAILED data processor forced Nasa to delay yesterday's launch of the space shuttle Columbia on a two-week mission to study the brain and nervous system as never before.

Nasa is to try again today to launch the shuttle, its crew and more than 2,000 creatures, including rats, mice, crickets, fish and snails. — Reuters, Cape Canaveral.

Havel faces knife again

THE Czech president, Vaclav Havel, will require a second operation on his intestine in about six weeks, the Austrian press agency APA quoted Innsbruck University Hospital's chief surgeon, Ernst Bodner, as saying yesterday.

Dr Bodner removed about 12 inches of Mr Havel's gut on Tuesday after he fell ill while on holiday with his wife in the Tyrolean Alps. — Reuters, Vienna.

Reaching for the sky

HANDS raised in triumph. Alain "Spiderman" Robert stands on the Obelisk in the Place de la Concorde, Paris, having hauled himself up the 78ft monument using only the finger-holds provided by his own Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Mr Robert, aged 35, from Valence, France, has scaled 80 skyscrapers in his global pursuit of publicity stunts.

"It was a super climb," he said yesterday as he descended into the arms of the waiting police for his 35th arrest. — AP.

Road crash deaths rise

SOUTH AFRICAN police said yesterday the death toll in a five-vehicle smash in the eastern province of KwaZulu-Natal had risen to 31, including 27 children.

A further 50 were injured, many seriously, after a school bus, horse and trailer, mini-bus, car and taxi collided on open road outside the town of Newcastle on Wednesday afternoon.

A police spokesman, Captain Godfrey Nyebe, said police were investigating the accident. An official said the children, aged between seven and 15, were from local schools and that many were in a critical condition. — Reuters, Johannesburg.

Turks push against Kurds

TURKISH troops have killed 18 more Kurdish rebels in a big push in the mountainous south-east, taking the death toll in three days of clashes to 93, a security official said yesterday.

He said a large force was fighting between 120 and 200 Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) guerrillas around Cudi mountain, along the Iraqi border. Turkish F-16 fighter jets took off from a military base near the regional capital of Diyarbakir on bombing runs against the rebels, witnesses said.

Officials say the push is designed to prevent the PKK from renewing its campaign for Kurdish self-rule after emerging from winter hideouts in northern Iraq. — Reuters, Diyarbakir.

Napalm train heads home

A TRAINLOAD of napalm that triggered protests when it was shipped halfway across the United States is apparently headed back to California.

The 12,000 gallons of jellied petrol, benzene and polystyrene was being held in Kansas City yesterday while the navy searched for a waste management company to handle it. A navy spokesman said it would probably be sent to the China Lake naval weapons testing centre, 120 miles north-west of Los Angeles. — AP, Washington.

MediaGuardian

Every Monday in the

The Guardian

INTERNATIONAL

Race goes to the loud, not to the swift

Martin Kettle in Washington

IT HAS become a familiar sight in marathon races that on the professional long-distance running circuit around the world: a group of Kenyan athletes coolly and relentlessly taking the rest of the field apart, leaving the locals far behind as sweating and panting also-rans.

Familiar and, to an increasing number of United States road-race organisers and their sponsors, unwelcome. In an overtly anti-African, and in many eyes racist, move several US race organisers are barring or limiting Kenyan entrants and offering higher prize money to American runners.

The prestigious annual Boulder Boulder race in Colorado has just restricted Kenyan entrants to three places in next month's contest. Ken-

yans took six of the first eight places last year and eight of the first 10 in 1996. American runners will be allowed unlimited entries.

The race director, Bill Reef was explicitly protectionist about the restrictions. "It's our country, our event, our money. American sponsors want American winners, or at least Americans among the top finishers."

He says he wants to level the playing field. But that is not how the Kenyans see it. To them, the restrictions flout the international nature of the global athletics circuit and prevent them earning their living as professional runners wherever they can.

Last year Kenyans won the Boston, New York and Honolulu marathons and dozens of other events. This year they have won six of the eight races so far on the professional road racing circuit and

hold the first seven places on the overall money list.

They also offend by not giving the kind of up-beat interviews after the race that the organisers and sponsors crave. They often appear quiet, withdrawn and uneasy amid the promotional razzmatazz — and several organisers are not prepared to put up with it any longer.

It is not hard to see why the organisers of the Gator River run in Jacksonville, Florida, were the first to restrict prize money to Americans. An American, Todd Williams, finished first in last month's race and ended a state-wide television interview by saying "I love Jacksonville. And I love Gate."

The Kenyan Godfrey Kiprotich says: "Last year I won a race and got \$2,500. The first American far behind me, got \$5,000. How can the American be motivated to run better?"

Lawsuit accuses DiCaprio of conspiracy

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

IF LITIGATION is a mark of Hollywood success, then the star of *Titanic* and *The Man in the Iron Mask* Leonardo DiCaprio, can truly claim to be paying the price of fame.

For the second time in three weeks his name appears on a lawsuit filed in Los Angeles. This time he is being sued for \$10 million (\$2 million) for allegedly blocking the release of a black-and-white film he made in 1995 as a favour to friends.

Last month he sued *Playboy* magazine to stop the publica-

tion of a full-frontal nude picture of him in its July issue.

The new lawsuit against DiCaprio is typical of those often faced by actors in Hollywood who achieve rapid success. Producer David Shuman is demanding compensation from DiCaprio and his friend, actor Tobey Maguire for "egomaniacal" behaviour and breach of contract.

He said DiCaprio agreed to appear in the film for \$575 a day and a share in any profits. When it was first screened in June, 1996, DiCaprio "jumped out of his seat several times laughing, and clapping high-fives with his friends," says the suit.



DiCaprio: Faces \$10m bill for 'breach of contract'

But Maguire and his manager did not share his enthusiasm because DiCaprio so obviously outshone the lesser-known actor.

Europe

Poverty

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...and...
...writes...
...Walker...
...Gussell's

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The Guardian Friday April 17 1998

WORLD NEWS 9

Divided Europe

Poverty belt jolts EU ideal

A survey shows social policies have not closed the gap between the rich and poor, writes **Martin Walker** in Brussels



A woman begs for money on a street in Athens. A new European Union survey shows Greece is among the poorest countries in the EU

EUROPE'S plan for a single currency and economic policy has received a jolt of reality from a new survey that reveals wide variations in wealth, with parts of Greece, Spain and Italy receiving less than a fifth of the annual income per head of the richer regions.

Incomes range from an average £30,000 per head in the north German port city of Hamburg, the richest single region in Europe, to about a sixth of that in areas of Crete, Calabria and Extremadura.

The differences are more extreme than those between the richest and poorest American states, despite the European Union's claim to have created a single market and the EU model of generous social policies and welfare payments.

The survey defines the poverty belt as regions where the GDP per head is less than 75 per cent of the EU average. It includes all of Greece and all of Portugal except Lisbon, rural Spain, southern Italy and the former East Germany. Areas of Austria, Merseyside and South Yorkshire are included.

The formal launch next month of European monetary union, with 11 countries signing up for the single currency, now faces the practical challenge of devising an EU monetary policy which can cater for these different income levels and economies.

Euro-sceptics in Britain and across Europe said the figures backed arguments against the single currency.

"The plain fact is that you cannot run a common economic and monetary policy for a Europe as diverse as this. It is an economic calculus that simply does not add

up," said Graham Mather, Conservative MEP and economic spokesman. In the Netherlands, which faces a general election next month, the single currency has become a prominent issue. The finance minister, Gerrit Zalm, has warned that his country will vote against Italy joining EMU without a tough new Italian budget.

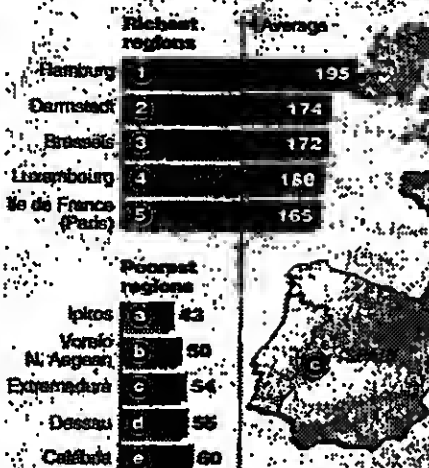
In the German Bundestag, the upper house of parliament, the rich regions of Bavaria and Saxony abstained from this week's committee votes on EMU because of concern about Italian debt levels.

Britain does not fare well in the survey. Apart from former East Germany, South Yorkshire and Merseyside are the only two "poor" regions in northern Europe.

Each has a per capita income of about £14,400, against an average of £21,400 for the rest of Britain. The EU average income is £22,000.

For richer for poorer

GDP per head, percentage of EU average, 1995



West, in getting EU money for the region.

"My region of North Yorkshire got £130 million last year from Europe, while all the rest of Yorkshire and Humberside got only £100 million," the leader of the Tory MEPs, Edward MacMillan-Scott, said.

The statistical picture of two Europes — a rich north and a poor south — endures despite decades of subsidies and financial aid from Brussels. The EU structural funds, worth £26 billion a year, are intended to even out the differences, but the survey figures highlight the limitations

of social policies. The figures show that national capitals have the monopoly on jobs and high incomes.

Brussels, Paris, Madrid, Lisbon, Stockholm, Vienna and Greater London stand out in their countries as islands of wealth. Greater London is the only British region to

make the top 12 of Europe's regions, with a GDP per head of 139 per cent of the EU average.

The survey reveals sharp differences within individual countries. Hamburg, for example, enjoys almost four times the income per head of former East German provinces. Despite high levels of unemployment, Germany has the richest regions: five out of Europe's top 10 are in Germany.

With £22,500 per head, Brussels is more than twice as wealthy as the depressed former mining region of Hainaut, barely 50 miles down the road. Paris, on £22,400 a head, is more than twice as wealthy as Corsica and Langue-doc. Lombardy, Italy's richest region with just over £13,000 per head, is nearly three times better off than Calabria, with barely £5,000.

The statistics released by Eurostat, the EU statistical arm, are expressed in terms of comparable local purchasing power rather than cash.

Available on Internet: <http://europa.eu.int/eurostat.html>

Chirac calls for French unity in favour of euro

Paul Webster in Paris

JAN attempt to head off a parliamentary revolt against the euro, President Jacques Chirac called a press conference yesterday to make his strongest commitment yet to political and economic European union.

The Gaullist president backed an initiative by Lionel Jospin, the Socialist prime minister who will address the French national assembly on Tuesday before a debate in which conservative and Communist Euro-sceptics hope to stop the single currency coming into effect on January 1.

Mr Chirac said he shared the government's view that closer EU ties were crucial, saying: "There is nothing more dangerous than immobility in a changing world."

There have been few presidential press conferences in recent years, enabling the president to turn the briefing on Europe in the Elysée's ornate salle des fêtes into a special occasion.

His opening message was aimed at national politicians and European leaders who meet on May 2 in Brussels to confirm that 11 countries, including France, have qualified for monetary union.

Mr Chirac left no doubt yesterday that he believed that

more EU involvement would strengthen France.

He asked Mr Jospin to concentrate on a programme of internal reforms, including lower taxes, to make economic unity easier.

"I understand the fear that French identity, culture and language could disappear... but these fears are not justified," he said. "Thanks to Europe, we will be able to assert ourselves as a determined and modern nation."

He warned his Gaullist RPR and other rightwing MPs to stop saying closer EU ties would dilute French international influence.

In next week's vote on the euro, Gaullist and centrist Euro-sceptics could ally with Communists who plan to vote against a common currency even though they are part of the leftwing government.

Yesterday, the Communist Party leader, Robert Hue, wrote to Mr Chirac demanding a referendum. Mr Hue said monetary union would benefit only bankers and financiers, contradicting Mr Jospin's view that it would help to create jobs.

The other main anti-EU political force, the xenophobic National Front, is not represented in parliament but its leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, has said the single currency would lead to bankruptcy.

Curb on tobacco adverts hits parliamentary obstacle

Martin Walker in Brussels

THE European Union's decision to phase out tobacco advertising has "no legal basis", two committees of the European Parliament announced yesterday, setting the stage for a constitutional clash when parliament votes on the ban next month.

The tobacco lobby was delighted by the verdict of the parliament's legal affairs and economic and monetary committees, which supported its argument that the legal basis for the EU move was flawed.

The decision was taken last December by the Council of Ministers on the basis of a recommendation from the Commission to end most tobacco advertising in four years, most sponsorship in five, and all tobacco industry support for sports by 2006.

Such a council decision is usually final, but with the parliament flexing its muscles after powers were given to it by the Amsterdam treaty, Europe could be moving into uncharted constitutional waters.

After strenuous lobbying by the tobacco lobby, and by publishers who feared that a blanket advertising ban could stifle a threatening precedent for freedom of expression, the two parliamentary committees have thrown the issue wide open and more lobbying from both pro- and anti-tobacco groups will follow.

Although the vote at next month's plenary session of the parliament in Strasbourg is only "advisory", according to the Commission, it could open the way for separate legal appeals by the tobacco lobby which may end up in the European Court of Justice.

John Paul tiles a bridge to the east

John Hooper in Rome

EVERY so often a lorry shudders to a halt at the gates of the Vatican, spilling powdery dust on to the unsullied black

uniforms of the Swiss Guards. After a quick inspection, it trundles up the cobbled street which leads to the Pope's palace.

The lorry's periodic arrival is one of the few outward signs of what

could turn out to be John Paul's most enduring contribution to the millennium celebrations. It is laden with hundreds of thousands of tiny cut stones — the raw material for a project that has earned comparison with Michelangelo's decoration of the Sistine Chapel ceiling.

For the past two years a Russian mosaicist has been working in virtual secrecy in the Vatican to create one of the century's most ambitious works of art. By the time it is finished, for inauguration in 2000, the Redemptoris Mater chapel will be adorned with up to 100 million mosaic pieces.

Photographs published this week by the magazine *Oggi* show that the ceiling and one wall of a sizeable hall have already been decorated. The chapel is in the most sensitive part of the Vatican, the Apostolic Palace, which houses not only the Pope's private apartments but also the offices of his chief minister, the secretary of state.

It is therefore by no means clear whether it will be open to the public. Some

of the Vatican's finest works of art, including murals by Raphael and his pupils, are hidden from view.

The Redemptoris Mater chapel combines several of the Pope's favourite themes. It is dedicated to the Virgin Mary, to whom he is especially devoted and takes his names from an encyclical he published in 1987.

It also reflects his wish to reunite eastern and western Europe and heal the breach between Rome and Orthodox Christianity. The artist, Aleksandr Koronkhov, is an Orthodox Christian and his work is uncompromisingly Eastern in style.

Mr Koronkhov, aged 50, said he had been recommended to the Pope by the Russian poet Olga Sedakova. "It was she who took my first sketches to Rome to put them before the Holy Father," he told *Oggi*.

His mother was also a mosaicist, though her best-known works are of a rather different kind: she was responsible for many of the depictions of triumphant socialist toll in the Moscow metro.

Returning Serbs killed by Bosnian Croat neighbours

Foreign Staff

AN elderly Serb couple were found murdered yesterday after returning to a town which suffered some of the worst ethnic cleansing of the Bosnian war.

Nato-led peacekeeping troops found their bodies after seeing the couple's house ablaze in Drvar. The couple had been shot in the back and the man also had stab wounds, the United Nations spokesman in Sarajevo, Alexander Ivanov, said.

Drvar, in western Bosnia, used to be 98 per cent Serb but virtually all of them, except for a few in mixed marriages, left when it was overrun by Croats in 1995.

Under rules which allowed people to vote where they used to live, the Serb refugees regained nominal control of the town in last year's internationally-supervised local elections. But the new Croat

residents of Drvar, many of whom are war refugees from other parts of Bosnia, have intimidated returning Serbs.

Under international pressure the Croats have allowed some 1,500 Serbs to return, but there have been arson attacks on about 50 Serb houses in the town this year and none of the perpetrators has been found.

The elderly couple had returned to the town about 20 days ago to find their house occupied by Croat refugees. They were murdered in another house in which they had temporarily settled.

● Serbia's deputy prime minister, Vojislav Seselj, warned Kosovo Albanians yesterday that if war erupts as a result of their intransigence, they could be evicted from their homes just like tens of thousands of non-Serbs during the wars in Croatia and Bosnia.

The former Serbian paramilitary leader was quoted in independent Belgrade media.

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Friday April 17 1998
Russian military die in ambush

Analysis Salaries



Curfew time 12

Britain's highest paid executive now earns more in an hour than a London teacher does in a year. Lisa Buckingham says that, in both the public and private sectors, there is only the weakest link between the job you do and the salary you get.

Trapped in the widening pay gap

SMALL children confront it in the playground when their BHS trainers meet a pair of £100 Mikeas. Secondary school kids come across it when they wear Next and a best friend turns up in DKNY. But it is only the workplace which has the power to thrust home, day after day, the realisation that life really is unfair.

In this arena, justice is way out on a limb. What you do and what you get paid have only the most tangential connection. Look at Jan Leschly, the former tennis star who is now the highest paid executive in Britain as boss of drugs giant, SmithKline Beecham. This Wimbledon player and one time opponent of the Nastase now earns more in an hour than a teacher in London does in a year.

The futures of millions of people lie in the hands of Mr Leschly whose company is the world's biggest maker of life-saving vaccines and which is prepared to pay him £35 million a year in salary and share windfalls for being at the helm.

It would take the teacher 3,000 years to earn that much. But during an average teaching career more than 1,200 young lives can be shaped. And the cost or benefit to society could be immeasurable.

Footballers can earn anything up to £50,000 a week for entertaining their fans, but for the £22.5 million wage bill paid by Manchester United last year you could probably staff a decent-sized hospital.

The disparities in pay and perks across both the private and public sectors are huge. This week, however, has seen the re-emergence of a notion which most of British business will find incomprehensibly controversial: that top executives should not only set an example on pay but should feel a duty to share the hard times with the shop floor.

Nick Reilly, chairman of car maker Vauxhall, announced he will give up his £160,000 basic salary for encouragement. His 10,000-strong workforce is currently in pay talks which could prove crucial to Vauxhall's future, and Mr Reilly

claims to want to demonstrate the seriousness of the situation by giving up his basic pay. He has encouraged other managers to follow suit.

Unions which compared their members' average earnings of £13.51 an hour to Mr Reilly's £30 an hour dismissed the announcement as little more than a stunt designed to upstage them in the wage negotiations.

However, it is almost certainly the first time that such a senior executive in British industry has made so overt and political a statement. Yes, Lord Alexander and Derek Wanless, the chairman and chief executive of NatWest bank, have just waived their rights to six figure bonuses. But that followed an *amnis horribilis* for the bank which was probably lucky to escape 1997 without falling prey to a takeover bid. Several Labour MPs declined all or part of the latest pay rise. But they are politicians, not business leaders.

On the same day as Mr Reilly made his unusual gesture, Frank Dobson, Health Secretary, said he was sure chief executives of NHS Trusts would want to moderate their pay increases this year, and set an example to other health service workers who were feeling the pinch of only modest wage rises.

His imprecation co-incided with publication of a survey showing that the average chief executive of an NHS Trust now earns £72,000, with the best-paid — Tim Matthews pocketing £111,000 for his role at the head of the Guy's and St Thomas's Trust in South London.

The notion that there should be approximate pay parity for similar jobs, or even that one sector should be roughly comparable with another, has long since been regarded as nonsense in the commercial world. It must be so, after all. Sir Richard Sykes, the chief of Glaxo Wellcome — Britain's biggest company — is worth only a tenth of Mr Leschly's package even though SmithKline Beecham is considerably further down the corporate league table. Sir John Jennings, the boss of oil giant Shell earned a comparatively miserly £1.24 million last year. And there are some poor devils among the chief

executives of Britain's 100 biggest companies whose remuneration packages totalled just £226,000 last year.

Faced with such enormous variation for such a comparatively limited range of tasks performed, it is little wonder that pay experts no longer make any attempt to argue with any conviction for a broader coherence in salaries.

Organisations such as the Top Salaries Review Body do still commission consultants to try to set a parity of remuneration, but that is predicated on the basis that benefits such as a non-contributory pension scheme, greater job security, and a public service ethic have a value which should be included.

The notion that public service brings its own reward has, of course, been used to devastating effect to keep down wages in most government-run businesses — notably the health service and education.

But what is less supportable, and it has resurfaced this week, is the whole idea that what goes for the bosses should hold for the workers.

Not since the Marks & Spencer chief, Sir Richard Greenbury, chaired a review into executive remuneration three years ago, has anyone seriously suggested that senior executives should take this linkage into account. Sir Richard and his co-executives at M&S have broadly kept the improvement in their basic salaries within a band into which most of their employees' wage rises fall. Unilever, the wholesale and High Street chemists' business, is another which attempts to align improvements in the boardroom to those of the wider workforce.

Most senior executives, whose pay is set by a panel of co-directors known as the remuneration committee, quite happily argue that in order to perform at their best they need to be incentivised by bonuses, company cars, private healthcare, share options and other long-term incentive schemes. It is quite common for these add-ons to be worth much, much more than the basic salary.

Yet those same bosses will contend that the only real way to incentivise their employees

is by keeping alive the fear of losing their jobs. Directors rarely leave the boardroom, regardless of their level of failure, with less than a year's salary in compensation. Employees who are let go are lucky to get a week's pay for every year they have been with their companies. The schism between boardroom and shopfloor is threatening to cause embarrassment to the Labour Government just as it should be planning how to celebrate its first anniversary in power. Although figures are far from complete, it is already clear that senior executives in big companies have been awarding themselves enormous pay rises in several multiples of the rate of inflation;

certainly dwarfing anything they are prepared to concede in negotiations with staff.

For example, Bob Mendelsohn, the new chief executive of insurance group Royal & Sun Alliance, saw his pay increase by 39 per cent last year to £771,000. Although he was new to the job, that salary topped the earnings of his predecessors by 40 per cent. And it is clear that other controversial trappings set to lure allegedly scarce executives are on the increase. Marjorie Scardino, the recently acquired chief executive of media and entertainment group Pearson — which publishes the Financial Times

and owns Alton Towers — was paid a "signing on fee" of £130,000 which helped boost her package last year to £825,000.

This is all on top of the huge bonuses which City dealers have been pocketing in the past year and which have already prompted officials to urge caution.

Previous governments have sweated under public opprobrium which apparently unjustified rewards for those at the top can provoke. Former Prime Minister John Major was behind the establishment of the Greenbury Committee which investigated executive pay after a stream of directors in privatised utility companies — notably Cedric Brown, the

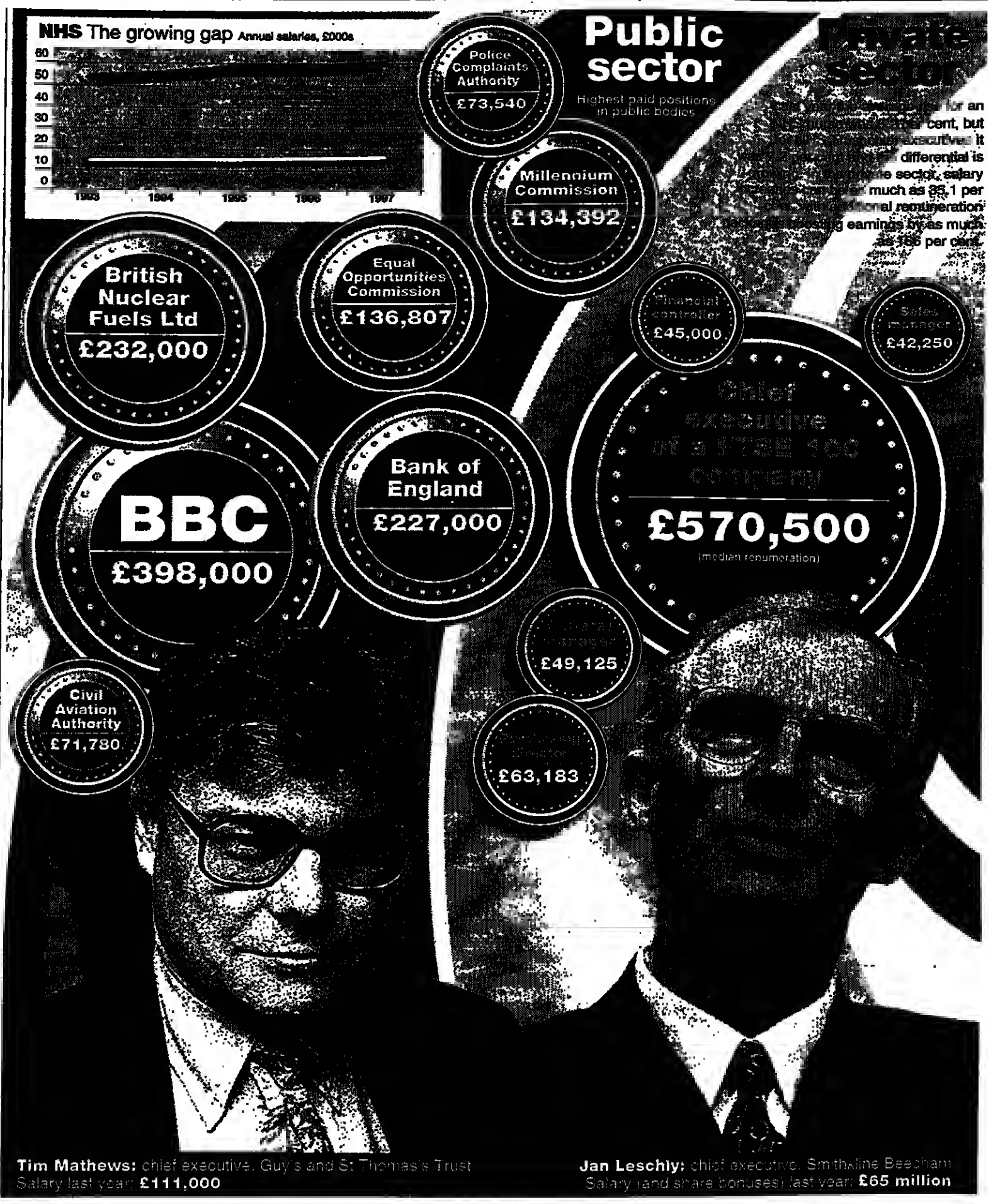
chief of British Gas — received windfall salaries and share option profits.

More recently Sir Ronnie Hampel, the boss of ICI, conducted a lengthy probe into all aspects of boardroom ethics, but remuneration experts reckon his recommendations will do nothing to defuse the controversy which is clearly building.

With a tight inflation target to meet, Chancellor Gordon Brown and Margaret Beckett at the Department of Trade and Industry will not want corporate Britain to unleash a pay bonanza. Particularly not one which could easily spread into a public sector squeezed for years by pay rates which have risen more slowly than the cost of living.

Yet this Government prides itself on cordial relations with big business; indeed hosts of its special advisers are among the ranks of those traditionally regarded as "fat cats". Clever thinking will be needed to avoid an unhappy showdown.

Sources: 1. SmithKline Beecham annual report 1998. 2. England's Premier Clubs: Deloitte Touche. 3. Incomes Data Services. Graphic sources: Incomes Data Services. Pay and Work for Research (NHS), Department of Health. Graphs by Paddy Allen and Steve Villers. Research by Mark Espinac. Lisa Buckingham is the Guardian's City Editor.



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Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

THE mystery of the Tory traitor — the minister Gyles Brandreth recalls missing a vote after saying, "I've got some right high-class shank tonight. I'm going to take her home and knock her rigid" — deepens. The chief suspect is roistering bachelor Phillip Oppenheim, an ex-MP now but a Treasury minister then. He voted in three Education Bill amendments on January 28 1997, but missed one. Phillip denies the charge. "First of all," he tells my colleague Simon Bowers, "if you ask anyone who knows me, the word 'shank' is not my thing. I might have used something equally colourful but not that." Having suggested he might have been in Brussels on business, Phillip goes on the attack. "It sounds like something from Gyles's own imagination. He was probably under pressure to spice up his book." This slur we will be putting to Gyles shortly, the very moment we have verified Phillip's whereabouts that fateful winter's day.

IN what may look to the untrained eye like a savage self-parody, New Labour has selected as a candidate for elections to Camden council a certain Rudi Champagne. The ward, perhaps inevitably, is Hampstead Town.

WITH the World Cup approaching, Scotland fans eager to begin their psychological preparations for the traditional first-round elimination now are being reminded of the 1978 World Cup. In this collection of reminiscences of the 1978 World Cup, it is pleasing to note that, although appalling on the pitch (apart from a sublime defeat of the mighty Dutch), some players performed magnificently off it. ... none more so than Martin Buchan of Manchester United. One of the brighter players, Mr Buchan became increasingly tired of being pestered by journalists with deaf questions and all he could take no more. On leaving the team bus one day, he was asked: "Could we have a quick word, Martin?" "Velocity," he replied.

IN the Spectator, Cypriot writer Taki G. Gikas gallantly rides to the aid of Paul Johnson. My sane and rational friend is writing a book about this newspaper and T-G is fearful of interference by Guardian journalists. "What I would like to see is the Home Secretary or the Prime Minister himself," writes Her Majesty's one-time houseguest, "order some security surveillance while Paul is writing his black book on the scene." A wise precaution. Perhaps he might ask Salman Rushdie to spare a couple of his Special Branch chaps now that the Iranian threat appears to be receding? Announcing his plan to serve at a drinks party in celebration of the book's publication, T-G concludes: "In the meantime, let all fair-minded people pray for Paul Johnson." Amen to that.

AN intriguing decision faces the City Council in Somerset, which is considering a request from the Mormons in Utah for microfilm records — nominally "to help build up the family records library," but really, some suspect, to enable them to carry out their perplexing practice of baptising the dead "to unite living members with their ancestors". Some may think it a bit cheeky posthumously saddling lifelong Catholics with a new faith. There is no word yet from the Kingdom of Heaven as to whether such a conversion might affect rights to residency. Donny and Marie Osmond are also silent on the matter.



A Beacon to the World...



It's curfew town, where the old are extremely scared of the children

Decca Aitkenhead



AS THE tall man and a camera crew wandered around a Scottish council estate on Wednesday evening, groups of giggling, staring kids had little idea who he was. Most thought he was the chief of police. In fact, he was the Secretary of State for Scotland, and he'd come along to have a look at them, and to talk to the police whose job it's been for the past six months to take them off the streets after dark.

This was the last week of the Hamilton curfew experiment and so Donald Dewar met community officers and heard how "youths causing an annoyance" had been "eliminated" and how residents felt "more comfortable". As Dewar folded himself back into his Rover, he said how helpful it had been to see the estate for himself.

It was a shame he missed the scene just before his arrival. About a dozen pensioners had edged up to the Civic Centre in the early evening sunlight, curious about the cameras. A group of snail-paced 10-year-olds stood chatting at the door. "Oh my God," hissed one of them, "here's the old 'uns." And the grey, wrinkled faces, heavy with fear and loathing, stared over and would come no closer.

The six-month pilot curfew in Hamilton ends today, but officials are already describing it as a stunning success: complaints of vandalism and disturbances are down, and so the police say it worked. But none of this is that surprising. If you ban under-16s from the streets after dark, there will be fewer complaints. But as more than 90 per cent of all offences are committed by males, you could put men under curfew and practically wipe out

crime altogether. You could solve the recidivism problem of prisoners at a stroke by never letting them out. All this would work — but it is not the solution.

But curfews for children are being seriously contemplated as a solution. The Hamilton experiment was introduced after complaints that kids were "getting up to all sorts", hanging around, swearing and drinking Buckfast wine. Pensioners said they were tyrannised by kids throwing stones and abuse long into the night. Graffiti and broken glass bore testament to the problem, though the local press identified the "problem" by their shell suits. Every single child I met in Hamilton wore shell-suit tracksuit bottoms. That's what he told these days.

A blanket curfew was introduced anyway, though the council called it a Child Safety Initiative, and insisted it was for the youngsters' own protection. Nobody I spoke to apart from the council leader made any such pretence, however, and spoke only of getting the nasty little thugs off the streets. Talking to pensioners on the estate, I heard the curfew had been brilliant — but then, they also said the kids are as bad as ever. "They won't be told these days," sighed a woman in the chip shop. "They tell us"

the smackheads and ocs with guns. His mate says his ma thinks the curfew's a good idea, but then, he adds, everyone's mad. His doesn't start to worry as long as he's in by 11.

It is hard to find a parent who says they disregarded the curfew — but then, it's just as hard to find one who says they let their kids out late before it was imposed. There is not much sign of the new "trust and warmth" between teenagers and police which the council likes to claim: a WPC says the kids love her truncheon and handcuffs when she visits schools, but they plainly love them less when they're being questioned for playing hide and seek. There are still a few kids out alone after dark — but then, those out late causing trouble were always in the minority.

For such an expensive, high-profile project, the remarkable point about Hamilton is not how much has materially altered but how little. The two real problems on the estates remain. Children have nowhere to play and nothing to do, and the elderly are extremely scared of them. Kids are simply more wary of the police, and annoyed with the elderly residents they blame for the blanket accusations and suspicions to which they are now subjected.

"There's an old lady up there says we take heroin," squeals a bunch of nine-year-olds. They are less likely to look kindly on her now. If the curfew had "worked", those elderly residents who called for it would no longer be afraid of children. Walking around and talking to them, it is clear they are as frightened as ever. This is the bleakest sadness on the estates. The pensioners agree they used to play in gardens and knock on doors and scream when they were young, and yet their lives are disfigured by fear of eight-year-olds in shell suits who do just that, and an ugly stand-off has developed. There are few facilities for the kids on the estates, but few for the elderly either, and in the isolation of tiny, inaccessible flats, their fear has grown like cancer.

Under the Crime and Disorder Bill, local authorities will be allowed to impose curfews on under-16s at their discretion. Many will take advantage of it, for a curfew is a great populist offering to the fearful, and Hamilton will doubtless be cited as a successful experiment. But authorities would do better to find ways of bringing youngsters and the elderly into contact, and giving them something to do, rather than locking them away from each other and giving them reason to fear.

The kids are as bad as ever. They won't be told these days, sighed a woman in the chip shop. 'They tell us'

remember when the curfew hour should actually be. Her friends got taken home once, but were all out again within half an hour. So why do people say they need a curfew? "I don't know," mutters a 15-year-old kid, "cause they're eejits." He sits up in the fields a lot when he's meant to be at school, so he's sometimes lost reads crisp packets, and thinks the police should spend their time going after

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Calling the tune

Bill Buford



ANGELA Gheorghiu is a black-haired beauty from Bucharest whose Covent Garden debut in La Traviata in 1994 broke the hearts of those who witnessed it and broke the hearts of those who missed it. Roberto Alagna is the Sicilian-born French tenor whose wife died tragically young that very same year, leaving him a daughter to raise on his own. Then Roberto and Angela found each other — well, they wouldn't they? Then they came to New York. New York is incapable of being anything but generous to its visiting stars — oo place adulates celebrity in quite the same uninhibited, gushy way — and the city was exceptionally generous to Roberto and Angela when they arrived in 1996 to sing in five sold-out performances of La Bohème. The couple responded by an act that has probably preserved them forever in the affections of every New Yorker who is not a critic between performances, they got married.

BUT earlier this month, Angela threw a tantrum — a complete PR wobble. The consequences will be interesting to witness. For two years the couple had been negotiating a contract to sing in a new production of La Traviata, but last week said they wouldn't sign unless granted approval of the designer and the director.

The production is being directed by Zeffirelli, and the last time Angela worked with him she was told she had to wear a blonde wig: she refused and her understudy performed instead. The next night, after some reflection, she decided that maybe blondes had more fun after all and went out with a mop on her head. But a veto over the design and the direction? (As it is the couple demand about \$100,000 a performance.) This was too much — not even Pavarotti or Domingo have approval rights over a production — and so Joseph Volpe, the Met's general manager, cancelled the contract.

The critics were vicious. Roberto and Angela had gone too far. They had become arrogant and self-important, and their ambition to be the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers of the next millennium was quoted with great ironic glee. It was also pointed out that although the two of them looked good on stage, they didn't really sound all that great. Ha! ha! ha! the critics said.

But who listens to critics? Do they have any money? The arts in general, the opera in particular, are done differently in America. Opera always has loads of money. Americans look upon the British plight — where no one seems to have any money and everyone seems to get fired — with undisguised hilarity.

At the heart of the US approach is a fund-raiser. Your taxable income is reduced by what you've donated to the arts. And in New York, the taxes are more than 50 per cent. So you give \$2 million to the Metropolitan Opera. You've saved \$1 million in taxes — well done! But you're still poorer than you would have been had you paid the tax. So why do it? For the other benefits. Those mainly pertain to privilege, the reward dispensed by all art institutions relying on hand-outs. Your name is printed in the programme; you get the best seats; tickets are held in reserve for you; you are invited to "gala" concerts and dinners held on the stage of the Met itself, with performance organised for you and people like you — that is, special people. Nothing like this would ever work in Britain, where people have already gone to a lot of trouble to earn their sense of privilege (special schools, special accents, all that); they don't want to have to pay for it as well, do they?

But the American approach also has implications in the thing performed. These benefactors don't want to be disappointed.

So, the fare, however star-studded, could scarcely be called adventurous. After all, how many times can you see La Bohème or Madame Butterfly? And do you really want to see another Zeffirelli anything, no matter how many live horses, and milk cows he figures out how to get on stage?

But the benefactors of the Met tend to be an older, more

Americans look upon the plight of British opera with undisguised hilarity

conservative crowd. They want stars; they want to be able to entertain their lawyer or Wall-Street friends. And on the whole they get what they want.

I attended one of the sold-out performances of the magic couple, the night that they made front-page news. They were singing in Romeo and Juliette, predictably enough. It wasn't a flawless performance. But the evening had a celebrity's charisma, and flowers were thrown on to the stage, and the aging, affluent corporate lawyers gingerly raised themselves on their creaky knees and gave them a standing ovation.

Next year, the magic couple will be back. In fact they've already agreed to sing in opera. They'll shortly agree to La Traviata as well. The management knows this. After all someone else is paying their salaries.

Britain's bribery culture is coming under attack from international initiatives

No sweeteners added

David Pallister

CAPTAINS of British industry must have choked on their breakfast kedgeree this week after picking up on a speech in Brussels by the Trade Minister, Lord Clinton-Davis. Bribery and corruption in international business was a scourge, he said, and the Labour Government was going to do something serious about it.

Can various silver-haired pin-striped British gentlemen then expect to be spending a while at Her Majesty's pleasure? Perhaps. Doing business in most developing countries involves bribery and corruption. Commission payments to officials, princes, generals or rulers can run as high as 30 per cent. The cash, disguised by over-invoicing, finds its way into

the secretive bank accounts of the Caribbean, the Channel Islands and Switzerland. Everyone concerned with exporting — in boardrooms, banks and Whitehall — knows and condones the practice. In authoritarian, military-run or economically corrupt countries, it is the only way to proceed. And in many advanced Western countries — though not Britain or the US — bribes are tax-deductible.

It is all, of course, frightfully secret and the evidence only occasionally spills out into the open. Such a scandal famously exploded in the 1970s when the US Senate hearings into kick-backs paid around the world by the big aerospace companies Lockheed and Northrop. The result was the 1977 Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

In Britain, the burgeoning arms trade of the past

15 years has lined pockets in the Middle and Far East. About 15 per cent of the huge British Aerospace Al Yamamah arms deals with Saudi Arabia found its way into the bank accounts of Saudi princes and their associates — who Tony Blair will be visiting this weekend.

Nigeria is at the bottom of the corruption table. Britain is 14th

The amounts are staggering. Al Yamamah alone is said to be worth at least \$20 billion. Last year US professor Jeffrey Winters, an expert on the Indonesian economy, claimed that about one third of all World Bank

loans to the country disappeared into its bureaucracy. The Berlin-based Transparency International, which campaigns against corruption, publishes an annual corruption index, based on the perceptions of businessmen and a wide range of detachments. It comes as no surprise that Nigeria is bottom of the 32-country league table, with Bolivia, Colombia, Russia, Pakistan, Indonesia and India following on. South Africa comes in at 33 and Malaysia at 32. Britain is 14th.

One way to prevent corruption, Clinton-Davis said this week, "is to ensure that bribery to secure business contracts becomes a criminal offence everywhere and is properly enforced. I refuse to accept that bribery in business is inevitable and that nothing can be done to stamp out

this disease." This was no mere ethical posturing. A heavyweight international movement is gathering momentum. Last year the OECD industrialised countries finalised the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions. Thirty-four countries have already signed and it is expected to enter into force this year, backed by national legislation.

The problem is also exacerbating the G7 finance ministers who last year called on OECD countries to criminalise foreign bribery and abolish the tax breaks on bribes. The French parliament decided recently that such tax breaks will be abolished when the convention becomes effective.

In Britain, the Home Office is reviewing the existing corruption acts. It is likely to make bribery abroad a criminal offence if the bribe is unlawful where it is made.

But these grandiose plans in a competitive world of globalisation and vengeful anti-democratic regimes will be incredibly difficult to enforce. When a man in gold braid and sunglasses suggests that he could only buy our weapons if he gets a little sweetener, we can predict that in Britain — the third biggest arms exporter in the world — ways may still be found to keep him sweet.



Guardian

death in Cambodia has its reasons

THE death of a young man in Cambodia has its reasons. It is the result of a long and painful process of rebuilding a country that has been ravaged by war and civil strife. The young man, who was killed in a recent conflict, was one of many who have lost their lives in the struggle for peace and stability in Cambodia. The reasons for his death are complex and multifaceted, involving a combination of political, social, and economic factors. The conflict in Cambodia is a result of a long history of violence and oppression, and the young man's death is a tragic consequence of this ongoing struggle.

Vote Yes

Y

In bad taste

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Out to lunch

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A death in Cambodia

Evil has its reasons

THE DEATH of Pol Pot is as obscure and perverse as his life, even now that it has been conclusively confirmed. It was only yesterday that a Khmer Rouge commander offered him — alive — to anyone who might be interested in trying him for crimes against humanity. We commented then that Pol Pot was terminally ill: a strange coincidence indeed that the final termination should have come within the day. Simple explanations remain the most obvious ones. Pol Pot was already a very sick man when his colleagues put him on display last year, moving slowly and painfully. Death by heart failure seems a plausible end. But he has certainly died at a most convenient time for all those who have no wish to see the enormous crimes committed in Cambodia — and sometimes condoned elsewhere — now disinterred.

Whether these crimes make Pol Pot — as one newspaper headline put it yesterday — "the world's most evil man" is another matter. Even to discuss the issue runs the risk of appearing to seek to extenuate his crimes. But it does no service to the one and a half million plus who died in Cambodia — or the millions who have died at the hands of brutal regimes elsewhere — to suggest either that the Cambodian tragedy is unique in modern history or that four years of mass murder only happened because the man at the top may have been a psychopath.

Cambodia in 1975 was physically devastated, politically bankrupt, emotionally des-

perate. It was driven by all these factors, combined with ignorance, poverty, envy and fear, to provide fertile ground for extremism and ultra-left dogma. Henry Kissinger yesterday spoke of the "so-called bombing of Cambodia", presumably as distinct from a proper bombing which would have destroyed the entire Cambodian infrastructure and traumatised the entire Cambodian people — not just a large proportion of both. That tragedy was one of the factors. The corruption of the Cambodian state, destabilised by coup d'état against the one leader (Norodom Sihanouk) capable of unifying the nation, was another. So was the fanaticism of an insurrectionist movement seeking to prove itself as more revolutionary than the Vietnamese. The dogma about rural self-reliance brought back from Paris by Pol Pot's colleagues played its part — too many theses, not enough experience on the ground. Pol Pot himself, as historian Ben Kiernan has observed, "never worked a rice field or knew much of village life".

These circumstances do not by themselves "explain" Pol Pot and his mass murders. But it seems obvious that people such as Pol Pot — or Hitler, Stalin, Mobutu, and other tyrants of our time — are more likely to emerge in societies suffering from multiple stress and dislocation. To say that they are not exclusively responsible, in spite of Dr Kissinger's disclaimer, for the multiple deaths in Cambodia (or in other countries caught in the rip of the cold war tide such as Angola) is not to make excuses. It is simply to acknowledge that in a connected world even the most horrific crimes do not occur in isolation and that they will only flourish in fertile ground.

In Cambodia the ground continued to nourish the Khmer Rouge for nearly 20 years after it was ousted because it was internationally expedient for the West to

allow it to foment rebellion on the fringes. The remnants of the movement still hope that this will continue. Yesterday a Khmer Rouge official was quoted as saying that the death should be "good for the Khmer Rouge". He hoped that "his (Pol Pot's) bad name will vanish with his death". There is indeed hope for the Khmer Rouge if we are unwise enough to shift all responsibility on to the shoulders of Pol Pot — whether we call him No. 1, No. 2, or No. 3 World Monster. If his death serves any purpose, it is to deal a death blow to the movement which supported him, and to prompt us to probe more deeply into the complex sources of evil.

Bulldozer taste

Eyesore or sight for sore eyes?

BARRY Sheerman's millennium challenge will stir subconscious impulses of creative destruction up and down the land. The Labour MP for Huddersfield wants to celebrate the millennium by razing some of Britain's ugliest buildings to the ground and replacing them with something more appropriate to the 21st century. Among London eyesores on Mr Sheerman's list for destruction are the usual suspects — Battersea Power Station, Millbank Tower, Centre Point and the Department of Environment building in Westminster. He also suggests Buckingham Palace. Following his request for other suggestions yesterday, James Naughtie of the Today programme offered the St James's shopping centre, Edinburgh — and it goes without saying that the Bull Ring, Birmingham, will be on everyone's list. So, let the bulldozers roll...

But, hang on. Who are we to say what is ugly? Where are the arbiters of taste who can speak ex cathedra? Not everyone has

the confidence of the Sultan of Oman who recently announced a ban on ugly buildings. (It seems he meant non-Arabic buildings.) What is beautiful to one person is repulsive to another. And beauty is often a function of the age. The Houses of Parliament, now revered as a Gothic revival masterpiece, were reviled at the time. Disraeli remarked that if the architect were to be hanged in public, it might put a stop to such blunders in future. The former FT building in the City, castigated when built, was later loaded with awards. Victorian buildings were regarded as ugly in the mid-century but have now been rehabilitated. The new British Library was heavily criticised while being built but is already awash with plaudits. The modernist "carbuncle" that Prince Charles prevented from being built as the extension to the National Gallery in London has enthusiasts. Mr Sheerman's dreaded Battersea Power station is a wonderful example of industrial townscape to others and Centre Point has now been listed. Some people even nourish revisionist thoughts about the brutalist tower blocks. This is not to say that the St James building in Edinburgh or the Marsham Street monstrosity will be tomorrow's architectural shrines, merely that we need a lot of time to be really sure. A millennium?

Let's surf, Tony

And glimpse the others too

THE Prime Minister has done well to expand the Number 10 Internet web site inaugurated by his predecessor. Apart from lots of service information about Downing Street and its previous occupants (written with impeccable impartiality), it contains

interactive chat rooms where the public can discuss policies on economics, education and health — or start their own debates which ministers may join from time to time. If you type the words "sound bites" in the site's search engine, as like as not you will get some real sound bites (like a brief audio recording from a recent Robin Cook speech). One of the few qualifications is that the print is so small in places that people might have difficulty reading it.

This month's high point will be a live question and answer session by the Prime Minister, claimed to be the first of its kind for a PM in Europe (though the Chancellor, Gordon Brown did a live session at the time of the last budget). If this turns out to be a successful experiment it could be a good place for MPs to recycle questions that don't get answered properly during the Commons question time. Either way it is a welcome extension of the democratic process and of the opening up of Westminster.

The trouble is, like all innovations, it only whets the appetite for more. Why can't the Prime Minister put more official government documents and civil service papers on the Internet so that open discussion can be encouraged before decisions are made? They are all paid for out of our taxes and it would cost hardly anything extra to put them on the Net since they will mainly have been prepared in electronic form anyway. There could be a regular monthly or even weekly question time for all Cabinet ministers so they can be directly answerable to the public. And why not have a live video link to Cabinet meetings giving regular still snapshots? We wouldn't expect to be allowed to hear what was going on (well, not yet) but we might be able to distinguish between those who fight their patch in Cabinet and those who keep quiet. That would be a start.

Letters to the Editor

Of politics and prayer

LIMITING political parties' spending would not limit political debate, as Lord McAlpine says (Tips from the trough, April 16). It would focus the minds of the parties and the commentators on the content of what they say, rather than on who's got the glitziest presentation. What could be better evidence of parties' reliability with taxpayers' money than the effectiveness with which they spend a fixed sum for campaigning? Patrick Wallace, London.

So, Ian MacGregor was a socialist in Religion in American Life, slogan: "The family that prays together, stays together" (Obituaries, April 14). Shame that didn't apply to families ripped apart in mine and steel disputes. Good to see ethics in action. David Hewitt, Alva, Clackmannanshire.

NOT only is science catching up with religion in its conclusions, as James Kennard (Letters, April 9) observed, but it seems that it is now using religion's methods. The launch of a modern Noah's Ark (Report, April 15) from the Kennedy Space Centre acts as a pleasant confirmation of this encouraging trend. Benjamin Elton, Manchester.

If nobody wants that trainload of napalm (Wanted: safe home for napalm train, April 16) can I have it? I've been trying to rid my garden of chickweed for years. David Knott, Walton-on-Thames.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear. The Country Diary is on Page 14.

Vote Yes, for the sake of all our Stephens

YOU cannot imagine my sense of relief when an agreement on Northern Ireland was reached. I hope that the Unionist Party and Sinn Féin will support the agreement and encourage their supporters to vote Yes in the referendum. Meetings this coming weekend are the opportunity for them to do so. The picture of the IRA sniper road sign which had been changed from "at work" to "job seeking" (Terror risk to peace deal, April 13) was especially poignant to me as below it was a sign pointing to Bessbrook Community Centre, near where my son, Stephen, was killed in February last year by an IRA sniper. The first soldier killed in Northern Ireland was Gunner Robert Curtis of the Royal Artillery. I hope that my son, who served in the same regiment, will be the last.

For my son and boys with the name Stephen have been killed in the troubles — soldiers, policemen and civilians. Can we now find a way out together, respecting each other's right to try to achieve

our aims politically even when they conflict? Had the Unionists been less intransigent over decommissioning and had John Major's government not been so dependent on their vote, I believe we could have been further down the road to a working agreement by now. The deteriorating situation after Drumcree in 1996 caused Stephen to be in Bessbrook on that February evening when he was shot, as his regiment was not due to go there until April 1997. So I feel that not only the IRA gunman but the hardline Unionists had a part to play in his death.

If the majority of the Unionist politicians do not support this agreement in the run-up to the referendum, I believe our government should consider how much longer they can support them both financially and militarily. Huge amounts of money have been pumped into Northern Ireland through reconciliation funding, for very little result, it would seem, when these politicians hold forth. Rita Resorick, Peterborough.

WHATEVER the doubts and difficulties, South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a genuine effort to heal a nation (Leader, April 15). There is no comparable structure for Northern Ireland and I suspect there cannot be, as the truth will be too frightening because of the possible disclosures of state involvement. We close our mind to these things at our peril and store up unresolved grievances which will erupt for many years to come. Marcus Johns, London.

HUGO Young's analysis (In Ireland for once, politicians have taught the cynics a lesson, April 14) of the "second guessing and triple subtextual meaning" at work in the peace deal is seriously flawed. The good and kindly light shining in Northern Ireland denotes the triumph of Enlightenment Protestantism on all sides.

Gerry Adams's hero, Wolfe Tone, was an archetypal Protestant nationalist, and every one about the Stormont peace table is a disciple of Tone's

post-Enlightenment materialism. To the degree that they are successful, the true beneficiaries will be Sinn Féin, whose Enlightenment rationalism is now more perfectly Protestant than that of their Orange opponents. Peter Higginson, Wolverhampton.

IRISH Americans, like Irish Britons, are entitled to have their historical antecedents and cultural ethnicity respected (Faux Irish, April 17). For a variety of reasons, be it the Irish civil war, the famine, poverty or other reasons, millions of Irish people over decades have left Ireland. Often disenfranchised from their heritage, history, language and culture, the Irish diaspora have fought to preserve their identity against persecution and ridicule.

I am sorry that Mark Steel finds this a little cloying. Kevin Meagher, Bolton.

IF THE hard men of the Orange Order wish to call themselves Loyalists they have to declare to whom (or to

what) they are loyal. The declarations from their leadership since last Friday show no loyalty whatsoever to the UK mainland. Indeed, we are all now "traitors". So who are they loyal to now? Harry Butterworth, Reading.

THE paramilitaries may think it humiliating to give to their former enemies weapons they bought with good cash. But if we allow the paramilitaries to sell their weapons on the international arms market, they can salvage both their honour and their investment. Perhaps Jonathan Aitken could assist. Robert Sather, Chesham Bois, Bucks.

PLEASE can we now ask Senator George Mitchell to go to the Middle East? Helene Neal, Nailsworth, Glos.

COULD we ask Senator Mitchell to turn his attention to Cyprus? Dr Owen Ashton, Stafford.

We do value blood donors — please don't staunch the flow

SHOULD like to reassure your readers that the National Blood Service, far from taking donors for granted, values them very highly (Letters, April 11).

Much has changed since Richard Titmuss wrote his inspirational book, *The Gift Relationship*, in 1969. The discovery of blood-borne viruses such as HIV and hepatitis B and C has made the protection of the blood supply much more complex. We are now required to ask donors a series of questions, including some about their lifestyle, which unfortunately does take time.

As to waiting times, we are investigating various ways of avoiding queues by, for instance, introducing appointments systems and extending opening hours. We are also planning to introduce a new tick-box questionnaire, which we hope will speed up the health-screening procedure.

We need 10,000 donations a day. Fortunately, we can count on the loyalty of our

existing donors, but we also want to attract new donors, who can enrol by calling 0345 711 711. They can be assured of a warm welcome. Mike Pogden, Chairman, National Blood Service, Watford, Herts.

PRESENTLY blood and blood products are supplied to the private sector at bargain-basement "handling charges". These are set at less than £50 per unit. And there is no proper system for checking that this charge is passed on exactly to the private sector's patients.

A more realistic charge would be from £100 to £150 per unit, depending on its nature. An increase would be generally popular and particularly acceptable to volunteer blood donors who want our NHS to benefit from their goodwill and not profit-making hospitals and clinics. Jim Brunton, Edinburgh.

In bad taste

NOTE that men are to be distracted regarding their dress (Designer makeover for man dressing badly, April 16). Who will decide what matches? Some of the most beautiful flowers are pink and exist within a framework of green foliage. Should such flowers be removed from the garden? Why are stripes and checks taboo?

Taste in art, design, food and life is a very personal thing. I am sure many men will object to being told to dress as a mirror image of a tailor's dummy that has been dreamt up by someone with a closed mind who considers



that he or she knows what is tasteful in terms of dress. Dr Davies, Ballygowan, Co Down.

I WAS appalled by your blatantly sexist tone. In these days of equality and harmony

between the sexes, such an article was inappropriate and unfair. I fully expect you to redress the balance with a future piece entitled "Women can't drive". Mark Redhead, London.

Jewish vote

YOUR leader (April 9) backing Gerald Kaufman's attack on the Board of Deputies of British Jews seems ill-advised. He calls the board unrepresentative, because not all Jews belong to synagogues or organisations represented on it. I am sorry that Mark Steel finds this a little cloying. Kevin Meagher, Bolton.

Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women, B'nai B'rith — the world's largest Jewish membership service organisation — the Jewish Association of Cultural Societies, and the Union of Jewish Students.

I wonder whether they would prefer, as you do, to support the maverick Mr Kaufman, who has not been elected to represent any of these, yet sets himself up as a superior spokesman for his co-religionists. As you say, Mr Kaufman is "hardly famed for his modesty". Like the Guardian, Deborah has not shirked from opposing Israel's Labour governments, as well as the Netanyahu administration. Wally Leaf, London.

Out to lunch

Bel Littlejohn

SORRY to be passed over again — for this year's Glenfiddich Award for food-writing. Sorry not for myself, that is, but for the many countless millions who share my passionate interest in the state of food in this country. My colleagues would be the first to admit that I've been at the forefront of food-writing

in this country for 15 years now, ever since the publication of my first cookery-lifestyle book, *Coping With Courgettes*, and surely it's time my achievement was granted formal recognition.

Of course, the overnight success of *Coping With Courgettes* led to my entire *Coping With...* series, including *Coping With Cottage Cheese*, *Coping With Lasagne* and *Coping With Blauzange*. Many reviewers praised this series for being so "intensely personal", and I took care to mix the recipes with very private anecdotes inspired by them, including details of my (then) husband's deeply unhappy time coming to terms with bulimia.

Recently, I've veered more into the realms of restaurant criticism — a vital role for any real writer in these pivotal times. My *Lunching With Littlejohn* restaurant column has long been the most popu-

lar feature in *The Observer*, so much so that they last week moved its rather dull *Peace Comes To Northern Ireland* headline to the bottom of the page, replacing it with the more lively, *Bel Littlejohn: What I Thought of My Crème Brûlée*.

Like so many brilliant ideas, *Lunching With Littlejohn* is actually dead simple. I take a close friend along to review a leading restaurant in London or further afield (I once went to Croydon, can you believe it?) then I write up the meal as only someone who's deeply concerned about food knows how.

Last week, I schlepped along to a new Italian off the Portobello Road with my good mate Janet Street-Porter. Did you read it? You should have. It was everything a good restaurant review should be: intensely personal, soul-baring, informative not just about the writer and the writer's com-

panion but also about all the latest ups and downs in their private lives, plus plenty of pithy, up-to-the-minute observations about the zeitgeist (have you noticed how bird-watching, maroon, Glen Campbell and premium bonds are all making a comeback?) and a truly dazzling turn of phrase applied to that most important part of any restaurant review — the reviewer.

IN THE first 300 words, I told how my ex, Don, bless him (not) had run off with a former actress he met in this one was not in Portobello but in Fimbo. To my certain knowledge this actress had only ever been in one episode of *Casualty*, and then only as a housewife with a nosebleed, so I don't suppose she was paying for her own meal.

Inspired by the restaurant, I let my *Observer* readers into my world, and confessed that

I was so engrossed in telling Janet about the way Don used to leave his filthy underpants around the place expecting the Little Woman to tidy up after him (charming) that frankly I failed to notice what the first course was, though it may well have been either a salad sort of thing or some kind of pasta. Whatever.

For the main body of the article, prompted by the arrival of our main course (something a little bit chickeny, or so my notes tell me) I got down to describing a disastrous meal I once had with the late Dorothy Squires, when I was attempting to persuade her to take up the post of vice-president of Women in the Media.

This in turn allowed me to wax lyrical about my life-enhancing experience singing old Moody Blues numbers on a beach in Morocco with Jack Straw some time in the late 1970s. Great days indeed —

and where better to write about them than a restaurant column?

Instead of going on about the sweet, I described Janet's brilliant new Stella McCartney trouser-suit in lilacs and deep, deep browns, and her plans — already in development — for a series of TV walks with Chris Evans around historic Lake Como.

I ended the piece by saying that after a couple of coffees, which tasted pretty much like coffee, we left the restaurant (note sub — name to follow) and moozed around Portobello market for 20 minutes, picking up some great bargains.

Re-reading this week's restaurant piece, I was knocked back by just how *giving* they are compared to so many others who just write in laborious detail about — yawn! — the restaurant they're visiting.

Memorise to the 1999 Glenfiddich jury: get a life.



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Pol Pot

Ruler of the chasm of darkness

POL POT, leader of the Khmer Rouge, was one of the most reviled figures of the 20th century. In his four years as prime minister of Democratic Kampuchea, he attempted to remake an impoverished south-east Asian nation into a model of radical Maoism. His paranoia and brutality sent it into a chasm of darkness in which as many as two million died. Pol Pot's enduring legacy is the thousands of mass graves that litter Cambodia but he was chillingly unrepentant up to his death at the age of 73, saying recently that his "conscience was clear."

Scholars will long debate what drove a man described by those who knew him as gentle and unassuming to create a system under which family life was erased, children became torturers, and even loyal followers of the regime were bludgeoned to death in their thousands.

Pol Pot came to power in April 1975 and set about creating what the Khmer Rouge saw as a rural utopia without money, or private property. The cities were emptied and Cambodia's history began again at Year Zero.

There are few clues in his childhood to explain the violence he unleashed in later life. His father was a moderately wealthy farmer and his mother had connections at the royal court in Phnom Penh. At the age of six he was sent to the city for his education and later attended a boarding school for bright students. In 1948 he was among the first students sent on government scholarships to attend university in France.

His political ideas began to form in Paris where he tirelessly studied radio engineering, failing to get a degree but becoming drawn to the optimistic vision of communism then circulating. In an interview in October 1997 Pol Pot said he began reading about the French revolution, spending his scholarship money on second-hand books and copies of the French Communist Party newspaper *L'Humanité*. Opposition to French rule in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos was centred in the Indochina Communist Party which attracted many students at the time. With communist victories in China and across Eastern Europe, Marxism seemed the way to liberate Cambodia from the French. Pol Pot began to attend study sessions organised by the French Communist Party. Another person who attended the meetings and later described him as "the most intelligent, the most convinced, the most intransigent. It was he who animated the debates and most impressed the newcomers."

Pol Pot returned to Cambodia in 1953, just before the country won its independence under King Sihanouk, who abdicated to take up a position as head of government. It was at this time that his revolutionary fervour developed,

he later said. Shocked on his return by the poverty of his relatives, he was driven to political action. In 1958, he began teaching at a private college, where according to his biographer David Chandler, he was remembered for his mild, affable manner and his knowledge of French literature. He was already leading a clandestine life in the Indochina Communist Party, building up networks of supporters. In 1960, Sihanouk launched a crackdown on the communists during which the party's secretary, Ton Samouth, disappeared. Pol Pot stepped into his shoes and emerged as the head of the party's Cambodian section. Accusations would later surface that Pol Pot had conspired in Samouth's murder to clear his route to the top in what was his first act of political violence. Pol Pot, however, denied any role in the killing.

In 1963, he fled to the countryside to lead the resistance against Sihanouk. From then on he would become "Brother Number One," the shadowy head of the Communist maquis on the run in camps in north-eastern Cambodia. In 1965 he travelled to Hanoi, where tensions were building with the Vietnamese. Pol Pot criticised at what he saw as their superior attitude and demands that the Cambodians hold off from armed struggle against Sihanouk until North Vietnam had won its war against the United States. He later travelled to China, where the Cultural Revolution was swirling up. Pol Pot was said to have been impressed by Mao Zedong's vision of permanent revolution, his harnessing of young impressionable minds, and the destruction of all vestiges of history.

THE armed struggle began in 1968 when Khmer Rouge guerrillas clashed with the army and police. The situation in Cambodia began to unravel and in 1969 the United States began its secret bombing of Vietnamese bases in Cambodia. At the beginning of 1970, Sihanouk left for his annual cure at a spa in France and was deposed by his chief general Lon Nol. The new rightwing regime in Phnom Penh galvanised the Chinese and Vietnamese, previously only lukewarm supporters of Pol Pot, and they stepped up help.

Sihanouk was set up in Beijing as the nominal head of a united front against Lon Nol, while Pol Pot took command at headquarters in north-eastern Cambodia. He had just a few thousand men under arms but with Vietnamese weapons and training they were becoming a more effective force. Vietnamese troops, tempered by years of warring in their own country, held off offensives by Lon Nol. US bombers took an enormous toll, beating back Khmer Rouge attacks on Phnom Penh in 1973. A year later the guerrillas formed a



noose around the capital. Its population had swollen as people fled there to escape US bombings and the rigid social control imposed in areas under Khmer Rouge control. The final assault on Phnom Penh began in the dry season in 1975. At the beginning of April Lon Nol fled into exile and the US embassy was hurriedly evacuated. On April 17 Pol Pot's silent soldiers, many of them just young teenagers clad in black pyjamas, arrived in the city and ordered all two million people to evacuate. In the intense heat people were forced on to the roads on foot, families were separated in the crush, even hospital wards were savagely cleared. As far as the Khmer Rouge were concerned, they were all enemies.

Only when the city was empty did Pol Pot arrive to

take over. He became prime minister in the shadowy government that presided over a squalid ghost town. He began to work on the Four Year plan under which Cambodia would make its great leap forward to socialism by 1979. Rice yields would be tripled to three tonnes a hectare and a vast area of land would be planted in the tropical jungles of north-eastern Cambodia. Those forced out of the cities, known as "new people" because they were supposed to abandon all links with the past, were sent to these areas to dig canals and clear fields. Hundreds of thousands died of disease, hunger and beatings. Of a population of seven million, as many as two million died. The Khmer Rouge cadres saw them as expendable, telling them: "Keeping

you is no gain. Losing you is no loss." Stubbornly ignorant of the realities of Cambodian agriculture, Pol Pot believed rice exports would finance his new vision of a developed Cambodia. Food production declined precipitously. Believing that the family stood in the way of his radical vision of socialism, he tried to break down the capitalist structure by splitting families and forcing people to eat in communal halls. Driven by the virulent Maoism of his isolated leaders and their vision of a racially pure country, the revolution destroyed everything Cambodians held dear, unravelling the connections of Buddhism, village life, friends and family. By 1977 Pol Pot's paranoia had started to fuel a series of rampaging, self-destructive

From guerrilla leader to dictator... Pol Pot pictured right in 1970 leading a column of Cambodian guerrillas through the jungle. When he became the country's ruler (left) he ordered the population, out into the rural areas — later known as "the killing fields".



purges. The deaths and torture at Tuol Sleng, a school turned into an interrogation centre named S-21, would be one of the most macabre legacies of his rule and the strongest evidence of his intense pathology. Some 15,000 people, many of them Khmer Rouge cadres and their families, passed through Tuol Sleng, where they were photographed and their confessions kept in well-ordered files.

A neat clerical attitude contrasted with unimaginable horrors at Tuol Sleng, where teenagers became expert at strapping their victims to metal bed frames and extracting false confessions through torture. The confessions seemed to fulfil Pol Pot's need to see proof that his fantasies of betrayal were real. The documents from S-21, Chandler wrote, "provided his vision of the world — with Cambodia surrounded by enemies and the country itself seen as concentric circles with the party leadership at the centre".

Tales of what was happening in Cambodia started to trickle out in 1977 through refugees fleeing to Thailand, but the closed country remained an enigma. Western analysts were only able to connect the fact that Soloth Sar and Pol Pot were the same person when he was photographed on a visit to Beijing. However, hidden by the secrecy, Pol Pot's regime was starting to unravel. Tensions were rising with the Vietnamese who had sent troops across the border to retaliate for Cambodian massacres on their side. In December, he cut relations with Hanoi and accused Vietnam of aggression. Hanoi, which had remained silent until then, began referring to his "barbaric, medieval policies."

On December 25, 1978 Vietnam sent 100,000 men across the border and quickly destroyed Cambodian defences. Sihanouk, who had spent the previous years under house arrest, was hustled out on a plane to Beijing less than 24 hours before the Vietnamese arrived in the capital. Pol Pot fled to Thailand aboard a helicopter on the morning of January 7, 1979.

That day marked the end of what Cambodians call "the

era of the contemptible Pot." But it did not mark the end of his career. Supported by the Thai military, he was able to regroup on the frontier and rebuild some of his guerrilla units, although he was supposed to have stepped down as head of the Khmer Rouge in favour of the supposedly more innocuous Khieu Samphan. His rhetoric turned more to stirring up the ancient passions of Cambodian nationalism and the deep fear of being swamped by Vietnam. After 1981 he disappeared from public view, living in guarded camps along the border and travelling to Beijing for medical treatment for his persistent malaria.

Little is known about his personal life or personality other than descriptions of him as calm and charismatic. He married Khieu Ponnary, a teacher he met in Paris, in July 1956. A sombre, austere woman whose sister was married to Khmer Rouge leader Ieng Sary, she would eventually spiral down into madness and spent much of the 1980s in a hospital in Beijing. Pol Pot married for a second time in the 1980s to a peasant woman in her thirties called Sar. She bore him his only child, a daughter born in 1986.

Vietnam began to pull its troops out of Cambodia in 1989 and two years later a peace agreement was signed in Paris. Pol Pot refused to allow his party to join elections and soon the Khmer Rouge were marginalised, cut off by their patrons in China. After ordering the execution of one of his lieutenants Son Sen, who he believed had tried to betray him, Pol Pot attempted to flee but was captured and tried by his former supporters, not for crimes against humanity but for his role in the internal struggles of the Khmer Rouge. His bizarre trial, at which crowds

chanted slogans while he sat impassive and unmoved, was filmed by American journalist Nate Thayer who later interviewed Pol Pot, his first contact with a Western journalist since the early 1980s.

The interview revealed his profound delusions and his intense hatred of the Vietnamese. He denied even knowing about the deaths at Tuol Sleng, which he described as an "exhibition" set up by the Vietnamese. He told Thayer that although the Khmer Rouge had made mistakes, their actions were justified by the threat of annexation from Vietnam. "I came to carry out the struggle, not to kill people... my conscience is clear. As I told you before, they fought against us, so we had to take measures to defend ourselves."

Pol Pot spent his last months under house arrest in a wood and thatch hut, partially blind after a stroke in 1995. His books had been taken from him and he complained of boredom although he was allowed a radio on which he listened to the Voice of America. Although he talked about the deaths of his compatriots in a flat monotone, he was animated when discussing his health, according to Thayer. "You look at me from the outside, you don't know what I have suffered."

In 1987, he told a group of political students that as long as his followers continued the fight against the Vietnamese, he would "die peacefully". His weakened force of guerrillas are barely capable of fighting now. But Pol Pot leaves behind a country and people still recovering from his years in power. When Cambodian refugees from his terror arrived in the United States some 20 years ago, doctors could find no physical reason for their loss of sight, which seemed to have been caused by intense trauma. Pol Pot's legacy was a country where people willed themselves to be blind rather than witness more of the agonies he wrought.

Robert Tompler

Pol Pot (Soloth Sar), guerrilla leader and dictator, born January 1925; died April 15, 1998

Sir Ronald Millar

Putting words in Thatcher's mouth

RONALD Millar, who has died aged 78, was a traditional playwright with a flair for by-passing theatrical fashion with luck rather than premeditated career moves. Just as his tone as a popular playwright became unfashionable he found a new and effective voice in party politics as scriptwriter and phrase-maker for Conservative Party leaders, most notably Margaret Thatcher.

His most remembered phrase is likely to be her "U turn if you like, the lady's not for turning" for the 1980 party conference. It was a play on words from the title of Christopher Fry's largely forgotten play *The Lady's Not for Burning* which Millar had hit on almost casually and Thatcher had accepted without enthusiasm. "Ronification" became party slang for chopping up speeches which might otherwise have been aridly ineffective into short pithy sentences and putting an arresting human gloss on them. In the Thatcher era at least, "Ronnie" became almost one of the family.

A large emollient man with a fine sense of humour, Millar never took a penny for his speechwriting, nor did he join the party. "I have an instinctive dislike of labels and have always found being pinned down claustrophobic," he maintained.

His aversion to the claustrophobic also applied to his private life. Though his mother lived with him until her death and though his sort of theatre was compatible with the largely homosexual theatrical managements of the period, he made it plain —

to playwright Terence Rattigan and the musical comedy composer and manager Ivor Novello among others — that approaches to him on this wavelength would be unwelcome. He had many women friends, but never married.

His political connections, which spanned 16 Conservative conferences, would have been impossible for a more egotistically distinctive character. Party grandees called him "Ronnie" with ease and used him as a universal sounding-board.

The sort of workmanlike, humane middle-class plays he wrote such as *The Bridge Club* and *Abelard and Heloise* — even though the latter did have an uncharacteristic nude scene — were, like Millar himself, more agreeable than memorable.

He was born in Reading to parents involved in amateur dramatics. When his father was killed in a motorcycle accident, his mother became a professional actress.

Millar was sent to boarding school at Bexhill and the culture shock was profound; it was perhaps this experience that gave him steel behind the agreeable smile. From there he went to Charterhouse. After seeing some Dostoevsky, he wrote his first play, *The Lion's Skin*, and his mother's agent, while pointing out that it ran to only 12 minutes, promised to keep it and present it to him on the night of his first big hit, which he did.

In the meantime, Millar went to King's College, Cambridge, and starred as *Creon* in *Antigone* and in the 1939 Footlights revue with the



Ronald Millar... he declined the offer of a safe Conservative seat, later reflecting in his memoirs, "Except as a theme for a play, I'm not really interested in politics."

future comedian Jimmy Edwards. When war came, he volunteered for the navy but was invalided out with a stomach ailment, leaving him free to star in *Hermione* in Gold Revue, work in Kew and Blackpool, write what eventually became his first full play, *Zero Hour*, and play a gunnery officer in the film *We Dive at Dawn*.

Eric Portman, one of the film's stars, agreed to appear in *Zero Hour*. James Agate, doyen of critics, liked it and Millar was launched as the playwright. He declined the offer by critic and MP Beverley Baxter to find him a safe Conservative seat, later reflecting in his memoirs, *A View From the Wings: West*

End West Coast Westminster. "Except as a theme for a play, I'm not really interested in politics." It was his play *Frieda* about a German girl who marries a Briton and encounters such anti-German feeling in this country that she considers suicide which, when it was finally put on, got Millar noticed. It was subsequently filmed at Ealing with a script by Millar.

He then went to Hollywood as a scriptwriter where he thrived for four years, but the movie studio system was already breaking down and the pull of London was too strong. Millar arrived back to write plays such as *The Bride and the Bachelor* at the very time

when such well-mannered comedies were falling out of fashion.

It was the novelist CP Snow who set him on what was in a sense his second career: dramatising the works of other writers. After he saw Snow's *The Affair* on a bookstand at Euston station he couldn't put it down and rang Snow suggesting he do the dramatisation. Snow was regarded by many as an old stick too dry to make good theatre, but in plays such as *The Affair*, *The New Men*, *The Master*, *The Case in Question* and *A Coat of Varnish*, Millar — the arch populariser — proved the doubters wrong.

After dramatising William Clark's political novel *Number Ten*, Millar was nearly 50 and decided on a pause to rethink. At a dinner with Ronald Maundling in 1968, he told him that their party political broadcasts were "bloody awful" but did not know that a fellow guest was Geoffrey Tucker, the man responsible for them. Tucker called him up next day and asked him exactly what he meant. Millar told him and soon found himself publicly rewriting Edward Heath's speeches, before and after the Conservative victory in 1970.

ONCE Millar wrote a 10-minute speech for Heath to replace one suggested by a politician who in Millar's view was a "non-communiqué" — Margaret Thatcher. But in the end, she proved to be more responsive to presentation ideas than Heath had been.

Their rapport was sealed when Millar wrote a short speech for her from his seat

in the stalls while rehearsing *The Case in Question*. He included in it a quotation from Abraham Lincoln: "Don't make the rich poorer, make the poor richer." From her handbag Thatcher produced a well-worn piece of paper with the same words on it, revealing that she always carried it with her.

Later he would often pull the curtains at five in the morning after especially fraught eve-of-conference speech deliberations. He became used to, and respected, her fairly constant, "But it's not ME, dear!" response to words he or someone else had written for her.

Ronnie was "in" for Thatcher's 11 years in power. He was invited to Chequers after his mother died. He was near Thatcher and, like her, had a narrow escape when the IRA bombed the Grand Hotel during the 1984 Brighton conference. He exited from the charmed circle when Thatcher departed in 1990, only for John Major to ring him up on the eve of the 1991 conference to ask him to "run his eye over" his speech.

So the pattern of help went on until the Conservatives left office in 1997 and Sir Ronald (he was knighted in 1980) found himself wandering into the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, of which he had become deputy chairman, and falling back into the perhaps more voracious of the two mediums of politics and art.

Dennis Barker

Ronald Millar, playwright and political speechwriter, born November 12, 1919, died April 16, 1998

Birthdays

Sirimavo Bandaranaike, prime minister of Sri Lanka, 82; Chris Barber, trombonist, 82; bandleader, 86; Sean Bean, actor, 40; Clara Francis, yachtswoman and novelist, 52; Bella Freud, fashion designer, 37; Jane Griffiths, Labour MP, 44; Yvonne Kapp, biographer of Eleanor Marx, 85; James Last, bandleader, 69.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

ON April 9, we published a letter from Erin Pizzey saying she had been excluded from the London Women's Liberation Workshop because she had objected to bombing attempts on a BBC van outside the Miss World contest and at the Post Office Tower. Sally Alexander, who was mentioned in the letter, has asked us to make clear that neither she nor, to her knowledge, any other member of the collective, was ever involved in any bombing attempts or violence. We accept there was never any association between the collective and the bombing attempts. We regret if any contrary impression was conveyed and apologise unreservedly to Professor Alexander.

MONSANTO, the US life sciences company, has not "called for" genetically-modified foods to be modified at source, as stated in a news item (page 2, April 13). Company policy is that it agrees with food safety authorities in the UK, the EU, and other countries that there is no reason for requiring the separation of genetically-improved products now on the market.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Mayes, on 0171 239 5659, 11am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Fax: 0171 239 5657. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

Death Notices

CROWLEY, Dorothy, on 14th April, John Crowley, aged 91 years. Beloved husband of Doris and father of Martin and Jennifer. Funeral private. Enquiries to A.E. Stoddley & Son Funeral Directors, Green Lane, 0149 522222.

DAVIES, Madeline, died aged 77 at The Circus Nursing Home, Bath, 28th April. Beloved wife of John. Funeral at 2.15pm, 29th April, at Bath Crematorium, 21st April, 11.30am. No flowers please.

EVANS, William, died on April 11th aged 91 years in a Nursing Home in Bedford and of Doris, formerly of Haver, Gwent. Beloved husband of the late Doris, dear father of Joan and much loved grandfather of Peter and the late Richard. Enquiries to British Overseas Airways for 61 years. Funeral to be held in Guildford, Surrey, on 14th April, 11.30am. Family flowers only please. Donations may be made to St. John's Hospice, Aggers Court, No. 2, Riney Lane, Headingley, Leeds LS6 3SD. Enquiries to Mr J. Hough Funeral Director, Telephone 01454 660155.

MACDONALD, Dr. Lucy, Bachelor of Letters, aged 77, beloved mother of Geoffrey, died at Chalfont St Giles, Bucks. After a short illness in her 90th year. Beloved wife of the late William, mother of Geoffrey and the late John. Enquiries to the family, 11, The Grange, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks. HP8 4NP. Family flowers only please. Donations may be made to St. John's Hospice, Aggers Court, No. 2, Riney Lane, Headingley, Leeds LS6 3SD. Enquiries to Mr J. Hough Funeral Director, Telephone 01454 660155.

WARREN, SA. Mrs. Mary Elizabeth, beloved wife of John Warren, died on April 11th, 1998, aged 88 years. Beloved mother of the late William, mother of Geoffrey and the late John. Enquiries to the family, 11, The Grange, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks. HP8 4NP. Family flowers only please. Donations may be made to St. John's Hospice, Aggers Court, No. 2, Riney Lane, Headingley, Leeds LS6 3SD. Enquiries to Mr J. Hough Funeral Director, Telephone 01454 660155.

Birthdays

SCOUSE, HOLLAND, Mrs. 70th Birthday. Party to celebrate on 25th April. Drinks and food for sale. All friends welcome.

To place your announcement telephone 0171 733 5657 or fax 0171 733 4129 between 10am and 5pm Mon-Fri.

سكنا في الامل

Industry begs for halt to interest rate rises as more firms take a battering from high pound

Sterling woe spreading to services

Charlotte Denry

INDUSTRY leaders yesterday begged the Bank of England to call a halt to interest rate rises as new evidence showed that the pain caused by the strong pound has spread from manufacturing into the services sector.

Export sales and orders for UK firms have slumped to a seven-year low, according to the latest quarterly economic survey from the British Chambers of Commerce.

Manufacturers are suffering export losses, while the services sector, which has until now shown little signs of slowing down, recorded its lowest positive ratio for six years of firms expecting export growth.

BCC deputy director Dr Ian Peters said the results showed the economy was clearly slowing down and exporters were taking a "real battering."

"There is no justification

for further interest rate rises," he said. "The Bank of England must now display a unified front and make it clear that interest rates have peaked."

"Failure to do so, or a decision to raise interest rates further, may be all that is needed to tip the manufacturing sector into recession."

For the second month in a row, according to the minutes of the meeting, the Bank's monetary policy committee was split down the middle in March over whether to raise rates, with the governor, Edie George, using his casting vote to spare businesses and homeowners another increase in the cost of borrowing.

"Exporters in both manufacturing and services are now taking a real battering," said Dr Peters. "Cheap imports are adding to the pressure on manufacturers at home, with clear signs of a knock-on effect on the service sector."

According to the BCC,

smaller companies are feeling the sharpest pinch from sterling's strength, with medium-sized manufacturing firms expecting a squeeze on profits.

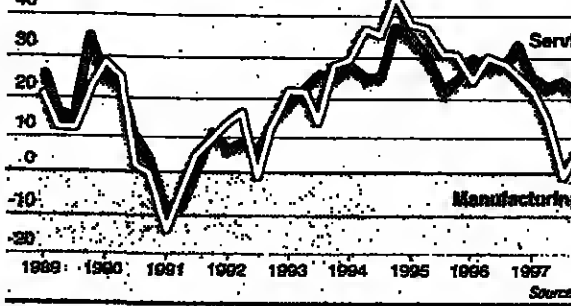
Slower growth at home brought manufacturers' confidence levels down to their lowest for five years. They expect to take on fewer staff. Companies in the service sector are still expecting employment to increase.

Michael Dicks, UK economist at Lehman Brothers, said the survey pointed to weaker than expected growth in the first three months of the year. "Next week's GDP report might not be so upbeat after all," he said. "We had assumed, before today's numbers, that it would show real GDP growth of 0.7 per cent, quarter-on-quarter — faster than in the fourth quarter of last year. Now, however, we will look for 0.6 per cent — the same as in that quarter."

David Hillier, from Barclays Capital, said the survey showed companies in the service sector expected things to

Getting tougher for exporters

Export sales, percentage balance reporting sales increase



get worse. The survey suggested inflationary pressures were subdued and that rates had peaked, he said.

But Richard Iley from ABN Amro said: "There is little to suggest that the above-trend growth services have enjoyed over the past 18 months has come to an end." The balance of firms reporting increased domestic sales pointed to ex-

Numbers game adds to experts' disagreement

BANK of England experts who decide the cost of borrowing pay careful attention to surveys like the one released yesterday by the British Chambers of Commerce, writes Charlotte Denry.

When the economy is at a turning point — at the top or bottom of a business cycle — surveys are often more up to date than official figures, partly because they take less time to compile. Surveys such as those produced by the BCC or the CBI can be a month ahead.

Recent manufacturing survey results have puzzled

the policy-makers. While the official figures pointed to a contraction in the sector at the end of last year, the BCC and CBI surveys suggested strong domestic orders were making up for the weakness in exports.

Hence the significance of yesterday's survey, which also showed a drop in home sales.

The Bank's monetary policy committee pored over the contradiction between the survey data and the official figures at its March meeting. The minutes published on Wednesday showed that hawks and

doves favoured the figures that supported their respective cases.

The hawks claimed the surveys were more reliable and the Office for National Statistics' first guess at manufacturing output should be regarded warily, because it was generally revised upwards. The doves said surveys did not track the revised official figures well, and recent revisions were downwards rather than upwards.

The BCC survey also offers policy-makers a snapshot of the services sector — a much larger chunk of the economy than manufacturing. Here, official data are less comprehensive even though they cover nearly two-thirds of economic output.

But yesterday's figures suggest that growth will have been lower than expected in first three months of the year. This will be further ammunition for the doves.

Prize catch



Casting wide... Keen to hook anglers such as Prince Charles and Billy Connolly (below right), the House of Hardy plans a chain of Farlow's stores across Britain

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN GOODWIN

Reel deal lands big fish by netting royal supplier

TONY MAY on the merger of two upmarket fishing stores

FARLOW's and the House of Hardy, the shops where Prince Charles buys his fishing rods and probably his waders, too, are to merge.

Last year, Gerry Metcalfe was called in to revive the fortunes of House of Hardy, the 125-year-old maker of exclusive fishing rods whose flagship store in Pall Mall attracts pop royalty such as

Eric Clapton, Roger Daltrey and Billy Connolly as well as King Hussein of Jordan.

Yesterday, Metcalfe, now managing director of House of Hardy, took over the 128-year-old Farlow's of Pall Mall, the nearest rival, run by Alistair Baxter who is joining the management team.

The ex-Hanson manager knows a thing or two about the trade. He took up fly-fishing for salmon as a way of

shops across the shires and Europe. A move downstream, with a separate chain of shops for the small army of coarse anglers now served by an array of sole traders, should follow. He is hoping to attract the business of Britain's 4 million fishing enthusiasts.

The ex-Hanson manager knows a thing or two about the trade. He took up fly-fishing for salmon as a way of

learning the business and within months had expanded the company with the acquisition of Perthshire Field Sports, one of Scotland's top fishing tackle and country clothing retailers.

By 2002, he wants turnover to be between £12 million and £15 million, through franchising the brands.

Like House of Hardy, Farlow's holds a Royal Warrant from Prince Charles. But while Hardy sells only its own coveted rods and reels, Farlow's offers a full range of competing brands. Metcalfe says fly-fishers are among the top 10 per cent of the fishing world in annual spending, and his group caters for the pinnacle of that market.

It costs about £1,000 to kit out for fly-fishing, and a prime spot on a top salmon river for a few days at the



right time of year would take that outlay to about £5,000. But serious anglers could spend about £15,000 a year on the sport.

Metcalfe has already raised turnover at Hardy's — which supplies 50 countries and sells through 300 accounts in the US alone — from £3 million to £5.5 million, while Farlow's 100,000 customers spend



£3 million a year. The tone of the operation is relentlessly upmarket. Farlow's has taken over sponsorship of an international flyfishing competition from Benson & Hedges. And, no lugworm-by-post mail-order book, its ritz magazine is quality bait reaching 400,000 coffee tables worldwide and designed to please the Tatler readership.

£832,000 for a month's work

Ian King

JOHN Jackson, former deputy chairman of the conglomerate Hillsdown Holdings, was paid £832,000 in 1997 — even though he was in office for only one month of the year.

According to the food, furniture and house-building company's annual report, Mr Jackson, who left Hillsdown at the end of January last year, received a pay-off of £792,000 as compensation for his loss of office.

He was also paid £25,000 for his month's work and received benefits in kind valued at £15,000.

At the time of his departure, Hillsdown described the move as amicable and by mutual agreement, adding that Mr Jackson would be awarded a year's salary as compensation.

According to the report, the golden handshake comprises a compensation payment of £459,000, along with a contribution of £333,000 to Mr Jackson's pension scheme.

News of the pay-off is certain to outrage long-suffering shareholders in Hillsdown, which recently announced a fall in full-year pre-tax profits — including one-off items — from £129 million to £110 million.

At the time of that announcement, Sir John Nott, the former Conservative minister who chairs Hillsdown, said that the company would take action to improve its dismal return to shareholders, and promised to consider a "full range of options".

Sir John is expected to outline what action the board will take at next month's annual meeting, and speculation is rife in the City that Hillsdown could break itself up, or at least demerge its house-building business, Fairview Homes.

Mr Jackson, aged 48, had been with Hillsdown for 20 years — including eight as deputy chairman — and at the time of his departure was the company's second-biggest individual shareholder, after Sir Harry Solomon, Hillsdown's founder.

No one from Hillsdown was available last night to discuss the matter.

© Sir Christopher Lewinton, chairman of the engineering group TI, received a 2 per cent pay increase last year, taking his earnings to £1.16 million, according to the company's annual report.

William Laule, chief executive of TI — which was relegated from the FTSE 100 index during the period — saw his salary rise from £396,000 to £500,000.

News in brief

James Keen

ON SEPTEMBER 25, 1996, we published an article under the headline "Rogue trader cost UBS £500,000" which reported the outcome of the disciplinary proceedings brought by the Securities and Futures Authority against UBS and two of its traders, one of whom was James Keen. The SFA never suggested that Mr Keen deliberately concealed losses or that he acted dishonestly. We regret our report suggested otherwise and we have apologised to Mr Keen and paid his legal costs and appropriate damages.

Microsoft bug-infested

MICROSOFT admitted last night for the first time that two dozen of its products have problems with the "millennium bug", including the Windows 95 and Windows NT operating systems. Although it characterised most problems as "minor issues", Microsoft said three older software programs had serious flaws.

The Windows operating system, which runs on about 90 per cent of all personal computers, is generally "year 2000 compliant", Jason Matusow, manager of Microsoft's year 2000 compliance programme, said. Windows 98, the upgrade due out on June 25, fully meets year 2000 requirements, while Windows 95 and Windows NT are compliant except for minor issues. Microsoft is in the process of testing its older Windows 3.1 version. — AP

Cendant's NCP hopes dented

A SHADOW was cast across the \$201 million takeover of National Car Parks yesterday when nearly \$9 billion was wiped off the market value of Cendant, the bidder. The US company's shares fell as much as 33 per cent after Cendant said it was restating its earnings because of accounting irregularities discovered at an offshoot of CUC International, a company it acquired in December for \$8 billion.

The NCP deal should not be affected because it is for cash and both parties are determined to push the deal through. But the stock market collapse has shaken confidence in Cendant's top management. — Tony May

Welsh coal co-op mooted

A PROPOSAL to set up a government-sponsored co-operative to market and distribute Welsh coal has been welcomed by Welsh Office industry minister Peter Hain. The suggestion, made in a report by the Cardiff Business School in co-operation with the Welsh Office, would represent a first tentative step away from the private ownership and control of the mining industry enforced by the Conservative government at the end of 1994.

The establishment of Welsh Coal Limited, with the support of the Welsh Office and the Welsh Development Agency, is one of a string of interventionist proposals arising out of a conference organised by Mr Hain last December to bolster the rump of an industry which once employed 270,000 workers. — Seumas Milne

Safeway reshuffles card

SAFeway, the struggling supermarket chain, has launched a customer loyalty initiative which gives high-spending shoppers the opportunity to earn bigger rewards. The company introduced its loyalty card in 1995 and the changes announced yesterday mean that anyone spending £150 or more a month will earn double points on all their shopping the following month. Those who spend £240-plus will receive triple points. — Rupert Jones

Africa's poverty trap gapes as lending slumps

World Bank report optimistic but not for sub-Saharan region

Mark Tran in Washington

IF YOU thought that an Asian tiger enjoyed the world's fastest-growing economy in the past three decades, you would be wrong. Botswana's per capita income grew 9.2 per cent between 1995 and 1996, compared with 7.3 per cent for the second-fastest performer, South Korea. China was third, achieving 6.7 per cent.

Botswana's performance — a strong one and much to do with the diamond trade — is

one among the many featured in the report, World Development Indicators 1998, released by the World Bank yesterday.

In its second year now, the 389-page report gives comprehensive data on the state of the world's economic and social health. It shows how well the world is meeting six key development goals: the reduction of the extreme poverty rate by half, universal primary education, and to gender disparities in education, the cutting of infant and child mortality by two-thirds and of maternal mortality by

three-quarters, access to reproductive health, and the reversal of environmental damage.

"There is a common perception that there is no good news to report on development," said World Bank chief economist Joseph Stiglitz, "but the WDI is full of data to the contrary. Living standards have risen over the past 25 years. Since 1970, life expectancy has risen four months every year, infant mortality has been cut nearly in half, food production has outpaced population growth of nearly 2 billion, and 70 per cent of adults in the developing world can read today."

The report gives an upbeat picture for the developing

countries. The World Bank predicts that their growth will continue until the end of the century, rebounding from the temporary setback of the Asian financial crisis. Developing countries, excluding those in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, have generally seen their gross domestic product rise by more than 5 per cent. In South Asia, potentially the next region poised for economic take-off, the economy has grown by more than 6 per cent.

But sub-Saharan Africa is not expected to meet growth targets to reduce poverty by half by 2015. The region needs to grow 1.9 per cent annually, but suffered negative growth of 1.5 per cent from 1991 to

1995, and is projected to grow only 1.1 per cent in 1997-2000.

The World Bank survey shows that military spending has shrunk considerably since the end of the cold war. For the world as a whole, arms expenditure dropped from 2.2 per cent of GDP to 2.8 per cent between 1985 and 1995. In some countries the decline was dramatic. In Vietnam, for example, military expenditure fell from 19.4 per cent to 2.6 per cent. In Syria, spending fell from 21.8 per cent to 7.2 per cent.

While universal primary education is a key World Bank goal, the institution yesterday came under fire from the charity Oxfam for now devoting fewer resources from

its soft loan arm, the International Development Association, to basic social services such as education, and health and nutrition.

The Bank made a commitment to sharply increase lending for social sectors to about \$15 billion (£8.9 billion) over the next three years, yet its lending figures for 1997 show that overall lending for these sectors has plummeted — from roughly \$4 billion in 1996 to just \$3.2 billion in 1997.

The Bank says that as lending takes place over a three-year cycle, there will be fluctuations. Oxfam, however, argues that, despite the rhetoric, the drop reflects the lack of political clout needed for basic social programmes.

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Friday April 17 1992

Merger creates helicopter firm to rival Americans

£5 billion of orders to be fulfilled

David Gow and John Hooper in Rome

THE pace of consolidation in Europe's defence industry accelerated yesterday when GKN and Italy's Finmeccanica unveiled plans to merge their helicopter businesses, Westland and Agusta, by early next year.

A combination of Westland and state-owned Agusta is designed to match the financial firepower and industrial muscle of such larger US rivals as Boeing and would create the world's second-biggest helicopter maker, with a £5 billion order book and annual sales of £1 billion.

Westland's order book alone, based on contracts for its EH101, Super Lynx and Apache helicopters, stands at more than £3.6 billion, but GKN and Finmeccanica, part of the ailing IRI state holding, said they were planning "an alliance of equals". Westland has been seen as a potential bidder for Agusta under the Italian government's privatisation programme.

David Turner, GKN's finance director, said last night that the actual split would be determined over the next nine months or so but pointed out that Agusta's order book seemed slimmer because much of it was for shorter-term, civilian contracts, while Westland's was primarily for longer-term military contracts.

The Italian industry minister, Pier Luigi Bersani, called it an "important step on the road to involving our companies in evenly balanced alliances in the aerospace, defence and high technology sectors".

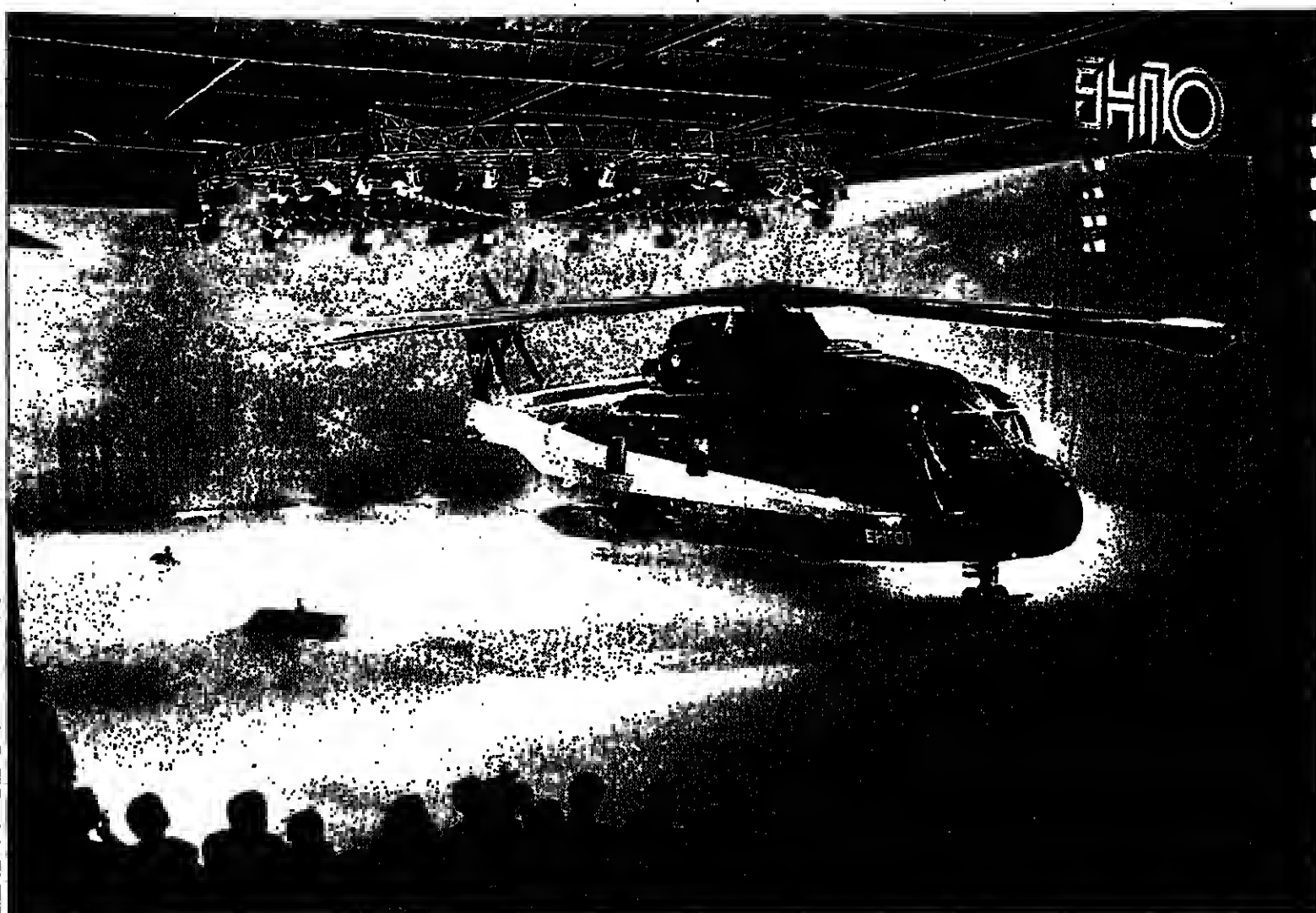
Agusta, which jointly produces the EH101 with Westland, is developing a new helicopter, the A139. The EH101, which has 98 orders on its books, is seen by defence experts as front-runner to be chosen by the Royal Navy for its two new assault ships, HMS Albion and HMS Bulwark, which enter service in 2002.

Richard Case, Westland's chief executive, who is likely to head the merged business, held out the prospect of a further merger with another European or American helicopter maker.

Mr Turner added: "The combined business will be of sufficient size and product range to go forward on its own but, eventually, will be in a strong position to possibly participate in a further round of European consolidation or look across the Atlantic."

Analysts doubt, however, whether a formal alliance could be achieved with Eurocopter, the rival joint venture between France's state-owned Aérospatiale and Germany's Dasa, part of the Daimler-Benz empire, because it would involve a three-way deal.

This has already cast doubt on the ambitions of the French and German groups and British Aerospace even-



In demand... Westland currently has 98 orders on its books for the EH101, seen here at its roll-out in 1987

PHOTOGRAPH: KENNETH SAUNDERS

restructuring. The Italian group is poised to conclude a joint venture between GEC and its Alenia unit to combine their defence electronics businesses, including missiles and radar systems.

The move is another feather in the cap for GKN's chief executive, CK Chow, who will next week confirm that his company, three German partners and French group Giat have won the initial £1 billion contract to supply 600 "battlefield taxis" for the British and German armies.

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Notebook

EU defenders link their arms



Edited by Mark Milner

ASK which companies were front runners in the much talked about rationalisation of Europe's defence industry and Britain's GKN or Italy's Finmeccanica would have topped few lists. But yesterday the two put themselves in pole position in the restructuring race with the prospect of a merger of their helicopter operations, Westland and Agusta.

The move has been given a warm welcome by the financial markets, though it cannot have come as a complete surprise. Westland and Agusta are already partners on the EH 101 helicopter. They are also a good fit. Westland with rather more of a bias towards military aircraft, Agusta leaning further towards the civil market. If, as widely predicted, the contract to supply battle field taxis goes to the consortium which includes GKN, the UK company will be confirmed as a leading player in defence rationalisation.

Though the two companies involved have talked rather less than others about the need for restructuring to meet the challenge posed by US rivals — in this case Boeing, Sikorsky and Bell — a successful merger would cre-

ate a formidable group, second only to Boeing in terms of the order book. It is not only the Americans who will have to give careful consideration the new structure emerging in the industry. Eurocopter, roughly two thirds/one third owned by France's Aérospatiale and Germany's Daimler-Benz Aerospace will have some hard thinking to do if an Anglo-Italian merger delivers the goods in terms of cost savings, product range and marketing reach.

See-through Brown

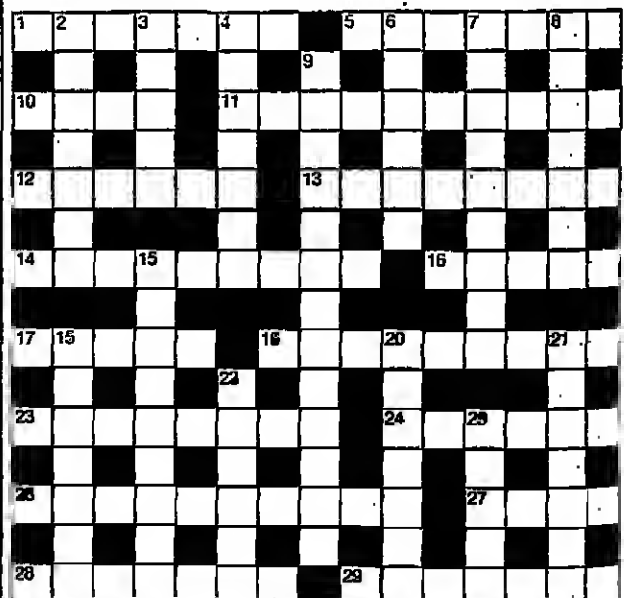
AMONG Gordon Brown's international successes since he took over at the Treasury is his insistence that the International Monetary Fund adopt a more aggressive approach in encouraging transparency among member countries.

At the G7 this week Mr Brown proposed extending the transparency principle from foreign exchange positions and reserves — a step the UK already has taken — to the whole process of fiscal and monetary policymaking through a "Code of Good Practice on Financial and Monetary Policy".

All of this was broadly welcomed by those sitting around the G7 table with Mr Brown, including the German finance minister, Theo Waigel, and the Bundesbank president, Hans Tietmeyer. Both nodded sagely. That will be fine, except that the G7 cannot expect emerging market economies to adopt these fine codes unless it does itself.

Guardian Crossword No 21,151

Set by Crispa



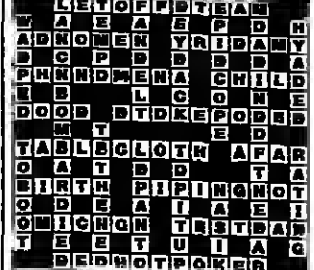
Across

- 1 Caught and being tried for causing a fight (7)
- 5 A meal is possibly responsible for such sickness (7)
- 10 A Mercian king of note (4)
- 11 Show trials (10)
- 12 Forwarded foreign coin — not for return (4,2)
- 13 Yielding nothing to pass on in disposition (8)
- 14 Tigers act unpredictably, though in deliberate fashion (9)
- 16 Many a letter appears somewhat confused (5)
- 17 Article about supporting protective wear (5)
- 19 People with disturbing thoughts (9)
- 23 Soldiers drink, so he says (8)
- 24 Slough, where gold is stored in quantity (5)
- 26 For every one a Pickwickian would provide seafood (10)
- 27 Picture being in charge with no backing (4)
- 29 Adjustment of reserve is comparatively hard (7)
- 29 Given guidance about entering a horse (7)

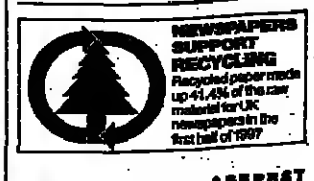
Down

- 2 Out-of-the-ordinary but unsatisfactory buffet (7)
- 3 Health-giving sort of bread (5)
- 4 It's unusual for a holy man to go far afield (7)
- 6 Put down a learned person's newspaper leader (6)
- 7 Alsatians dealt with the guy committing an assault (5)

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Heseltine's warning spins full circle

RICHARD NORTON-TAYLOR examines the effects of 13 years of turbulent history following the Westland crisis

ONETIME Tory leadership challenger Michael Heseltine could be forgiven a wry smile over yesterday's events. It was nearly 13 years ago when he, as the then defence secretary, warned MPs about a potential serious threat to the defence industry base of Britain and Europe.

He went further. Britain's very defence interests were at stake.

It was the height of the Westland crisis. It rocked the Thatcher government, led to Mr Heseltine's dramatic Cabinet walk-out and the resignation of Lord Brittan, the trade and industry secretary and scapegoat for the leak — designed to damage Mr Heseltine — of a private letter from the collector-general, Sir Patrick Mayhew.

Yesterday, politicians and

defence analysts summoned the ghost of that crisis as they welcomed the deal between Westland and Agusta. But not without a warning.

Mr Heseltine opposed Westland's rescue by a US company, United Technologies Corporation and its Sikorsky Aircraft division, via a rights issue.

He proposed alternative saviours in the shape of a European consortium consisting of BAE, GEC, Aérospatiale, MBB of west Germany, and Agusta, the very firms at the centre of today's European consolidation.

Put crudely, the two polarised camps faced a simple choice then between Europe and the US. And it was for the Government to decide. Yesterday's deal, decided by the two companies, has more subtle implications.

Spending to save aims to bring in nearly £5 billion in money owed from a spending on enforcement of £800 million. Already, settlements with the Revenue by those owing up to



Still railing... Thirteen years ago, and defence secretary Michael Heseltine de-merges himself from Margaret Thatcher's Cabinet

PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEAVER

"This is undoubtedly the way of the future and I am confident that industrial integration of this kind will form the basis of a far higher degree of military integration in Europe," said Menzies Campbell, Liberal Democrat defence spokesman.

But he added: "Any large-scale European co-operation will have to take account of

America's seashillies," referring to the recent agreement whereby Westland will build 67 Apache attack helicopters under licence from McDonnell-Douglas.

Bruce George, Labour chairman of the Commons defence committee — and a member of the committee which questioned Mr Heseltine all those years ago — said

that European defence industries had no alternative but to merge. "The biggest problem of all," he said, "is France."

Defence industry spokesmen also pointed their fingers at the French, who wanted to build a strong European defence industry, but on their own terms. The French government was still too wedded to state-ownership. They

referred to Occar, the embryonic European defence procurement agency based in Bonn, whose role is supported most enthusiastically by France.

The danger there, commentators said yesterday, was that decisions might be taken on political, rather than commercial, grounds.

"We need to be globally competitive — that is not sinking in France," a defence industry analyst with first-hand knowledge of yesterday's agreement said. "We want to sell around the world."

He warned against a "Fortress Europe" approach, saying: "If we crowd out the US, there would be a real problem because there's not enough business in Europe."

Thirteen years ago, Agusta warred Westland that its rescue by Sikorsky would threaten the future of the Italian company.

At the same time, Sir John (now Lord) Cuckney, then chairman of Westland, remarked that Agusta had expressed interest in a share in the company. "But progress was slow," he said.

Court of Appeal ruling could cost Treasury billions

Dan Atkinson

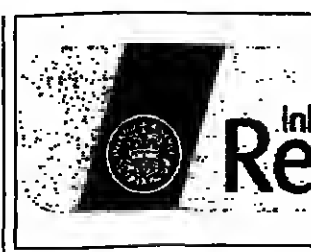
AJUDGMENT in the Court of Appeal could blow a multi-billion pound hole in the Chancellor, Gordon Brown's "spend-to-save" scheme to reduce tax-dodging, as well as threatening the hundreds of millions of pounds the Inland Revenue currently extracts each year through settlements with those who have owned up to paying too little tax.

The growing controversy over last month's decision in the "Regina v W" case — which overturned a 54-year-old convention under which those settling with

the Revenue would not be prosecuted — has also thrown up the question of how Crown prosecutors came to know of the "W" matter in the first place. Either an insider tipped them off, or there is a breach in the "Chinese wall" supposed to guarantee tax privacy.

Tax accountants Blikk Rothenberg warned: "The Treasury's spend-to-save programme, and the Inland Revenue's ability to negotiate with serious tax dodgers, is under threat."

The result is likely to be the grinding to a halt of the entire Revenue back-duty collection procedures, because those who have, up until



Inland Revenue

now, negotiated with the Revenue will not, fearing prosecution.

Spend-to-save aims to bring in nearly £5 billion in money owed from a spending on enforcement of £800 million. Already, settlements with the Revenue by those owing up to

underpayment amount to a sizeable chunk of the £1.6 billion or so currently raised each year by measures to counter both legal avoidance and illegal evasion of tax.

Regina v W effectively hurried the so-called "Hansard" convention — named

after the Parliamentary record in which it was first enunciated by Treasury minister Sir John Anderson in 1944 — under which those co-operating with the Revenue in settling their tax affairs would be unlikely to face prosecution.

This convention was restated to Parliament in 1990 and was reinforced by the fact that, once the Revenue had decided to proceed under Hansard, the taxpayer was not read the standard caution for defendants.

In the "W" case, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) moved against W despite his having settled under "Hansard". The ap-

peal court said it had no power to stop the CPS prosecution, because the CPS's powers of prosecution were wide-ranging and took account of wider public considerations than those of the Revenue.

One tax specialist warned last night that those settling with the Revenue now faced "double jeopardy" and predicted far less willingness to co-operate. The Revenue's attitude had been, he said, that "they would rather get the money than go through the process of prosecution".

The CPS would not elaborate last night on how it became aware of the "W" case.

صلى الله عليه وسلم